









THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
BIRMINGHAM

BY  
W. HUTTON, F.A.S.

WITH CONSIDERABLE ADDITIONS.

NEW MARKET HALL.



N.E. ENTRANCE.

ILLUSTRATED WITH MANY ENGRAVINGS, A MAP OF THE TOWN &c.

SIXTH EDITION.

BIRMINGHAM

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1855.

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TO  
THE SOBER, HONEST, AND INDUSTRIOUS  
OF THE  
WORKING CLASSES OF BIRMINGHAM,  
THIS EDITION  
OF  
HUTTON'S HISTORY OF THEIR NATIVE TOWN,  
IS

RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY THEIR OBEDIENT SERVANT,

JAMES GUEST.



## PREFACE.

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THE rapid increase of knowledge, in Birmingham, within the last fifty years; the great demand and immense consumption of books, in small parts, or numbers, that could not be purchased by the working classes, if published in volumes, complete; induced the publisher to suppose that an interesting record of facts would be acceptable to the intelligent mechanics of this populous and improving town. The quaint and frequently amusing style of Mr. Hutton, the first and only historian of Birmingham, caused his work to be fixed upon as the basis of this. For notwithstanding several accounts of Birmingham have been published since Mr. Hutton's; they are all copied from his work, adding but few facts, not before recorded by him, and seldom disputing his assertions. The editor has availed himself of every means within his reach to make the work complete, and worthy the support and encouragement of the working classes, for whom it was projected.

The present mode of incorporating with the text, the

new matter may, in some respects, be objectionable, but it can make no difference to the man who reads for information, and is of some advantage to him who reads for amusement. Without further comment the work is left to speak for itself, and the public to judge which is the most worthy of their support, *this* or the *envious* and *splenetic* production of Wrightson and Webb, of New Street, commenced five weeks after this, from *pure malice* towards the publisher.

JAMES GUEST.

*Steelhouse Lane, Birmingham,*

*June 1, 1835.*



## PREFACE

BY THE LATE WILLIAM HUTTON, F. A. S.

---

A PREFACE rather induces a man to speak of himself, which is deemed the worst subject upon which he *can* speak. In a history we become acquainted with things, but in a preface with the author ; and, for a man to treat of himself, may be the most *difficult* task of the two ; for in history, facts are produced ready to the hand of the historian, which give birth to thought, and it is easy to clothe that thought in words. But in a preface, an author is obliged to forge from the brain, where he is sometimes known to forge without fire. In one, he only reduces a substance into form ; but in the other, he must create that substance.

As I am not an author by profession, it is no wonder if I am unacquainted with the modes of authorship ; but I apprehend, the usual method of conducting the pen, is to polish up a sounding title-page, dignified with scraps of Latin, and then to hammer up a work to fit it, as nearly as genius, or want of genius, will allow.

We next *turn over a new leaf*, and open upon a pompous dedication, which answers many laudable purposes : if a coat of arms, correctly engraven, should step first into view, we consider it a singular advantage gained over a reader, like the first blow in a combat. The

dedication itself becomes a pair of stilts, which advances an author something higher.

As a horse-shoe, nailed upon the threshold of a cottage, prevents the influence of the witch; so a first-rate name, at the head of a dedication, is a total bar against the critic; but this great name, like a great officer, sometimes unfortunately stands at the head of wretched troops.

When an author is too *heavy* to swim of himself, it serves as a pair of bladders, to prevent his sinking.

It is farther productive of a *solid* advantage, that of a present from the patron, more valuable than that from the bookseller, which prevents his sinking under the pressure of famine.

But, being wholly unknown to the great names of literary consequence, I shall not attempt a dedication, therefore must lose the benefit of the stilt, the bladder, and the horse-shoe.

Were I to enter upon a dedication, I should certainly address myself, "*To the Inhabitants of Birmingham.*" For to them I not only owe much, but all; and I think, among that congregated mass, there is not one person to whom I wish ill. I have the pleasure of calling many of those inhabitants *Friends*, and some of them share my warm affections equally with myself. Birmingham, like a compassionate nurse, not only draws our persons, but our esteem, from the place of our nativity, and fixes it upon herself: I might add, *I was hungry, and she fed me; thirsty, and she gave me drink; a stranger, and she took me in.* I approached her with reluctance, because I did not know her; I shall leave her with reluctance, because I do.

Whether it is perfectly consistent in an author, to solicit the indulgence of the public, though it may stand first in his wishes, admits a doubt; for, if his productions will not bear the light, it may be said, why does he publish?



but, if they will, there is no need to ask a favour; the world receives one from him. Will not a piece everlastingly be tried by its merit? Shall we esteem it the higher, because it was written at the age of thirteen? because it was the effort of a week? delivered extempore? hatched while the author stood upon one leg? or cobbled, while he cobbled a shoe? or will it be a recommendation, that it issues forth in gilt binding? The judicious world will not be deceived by the tinselled purse, but will examine whether the *contents* are sterling.

Will it augment the value of this history, or cover its blunders, to say, that I have never seen *Oxford*? That the thick fogs of penury, prevented the sun of science from beaming upon the mind? That necessity obliged me to lay down the battledore, before I was master of the letters? And that, instead of handling systems of knowledge, my hands at the early period of seven, became callous with labour?

But, though a whole group of pretences will have no effect with the impartial eye, yet one reason pleads strongly in my favour—no such thing ever appeared as *A History of Birmingham*. It is remarkable, that one of the most singular places in the universe is without an historian: that she never manufactured an history of herself, who has manufactured almost every thing else; that so many ages should elapse, and not one among her numerous sons of industry, snatch the manners of the day from oblivion, group them in design, with the touches of his pen, and exhibit the picture to posterity. If such a production had ever seen the light, mine most certainly would never have been written; a temporary bridge, therefore, may satisfy the impatient traveller, till a more skilful architect shall accommodate him with a complete production of elegance, of use, and of duration. Although works of genius ought to come out of the mint doubly refined, yet history admits

of a much greater latitude to the author. The best upon the subject, though defective, may meet with regard.

It has long been a complaint, that local history is much wanted. This will appear obvious, if we examine the places we know, with the histories that treat of them. Many an author has become a cripple, by historically travelling through *all England*, who might have made a tolerable figure, had he staid at home. The subject is too copious for one performance, or even the life of one man. The design of history is knowledge ; but, if simply to tell a tale be all the duty of an historian, he has no irksome task before him ; for there is nothing more easy than to relate a fact ; but, perhaps, nothing more difficult than to relate it well.

Having, many years ago, entertained an idea of this undertaking, I made some trifling preparations ; but, in 1775, a circumstance of a private nature occurring, which engaged my attention for several years, I relinquished the design, destroyed the materials, and meant to give up the thought for ever. But the intention revived in 1780, and the work followed.

I may be accused of quitting the regular trammels of history, and sporting in the fields of remark : but, although our habitation justly stands first in our esteem, in return for rest, content, and protection ; does it follow that we should never stray from it ? If I happen to veer a moment from the polar point of Birmingham, I shall certainly vibrate again to the centre. Every author has a manner peculiar to himself, nor can he well forsake it. I should be exceedingly hurt to omit a necessary part of intelligence, but more so to offend a reader.

If GRANDEUR should censure me for sometimes recording the men of mean life, let me ask, *Which is preferable*, he who thunders at the anvil, or in the senate ? The man who earnestly wishes the significant letters Esq. spliced



to the end of his name, will despise the question; but the philosopher will answer, "They are equal."

Lucrative views have no part in this production: I cannot solicit a kind people to grant what they have already granted; but if another finds that pleasure in reading, which I have done in writing, I am paid.

As no history is extant, to inform me of this famous nursery of the arts, perfection in mine must not be expected. Though I have endeavoured to pursue the road to truth; yet, having no light to guide, or hand to direct me, it is no wonder if I mistake it: but we do not *condemn*, so much as *pity*, the man for losing his way, who first travels an unbeaten road.

Birmingham, for want of the recording hand, may be said to live but one generation; the transactions of the last age, die in this; memory is the sole historian, which being defective, I embalm the present generation, for the inspection of the future.

It is unnecessary to attempt a general character, for if the attentive reader is himself of Birmingham, he is equally apprized of that character; and, if a stranger, he will find a variety of touches scattered through the piece, which, taken in a collective view, form a picture of that generous people, who *merit his* esteem, and *possess mine*.





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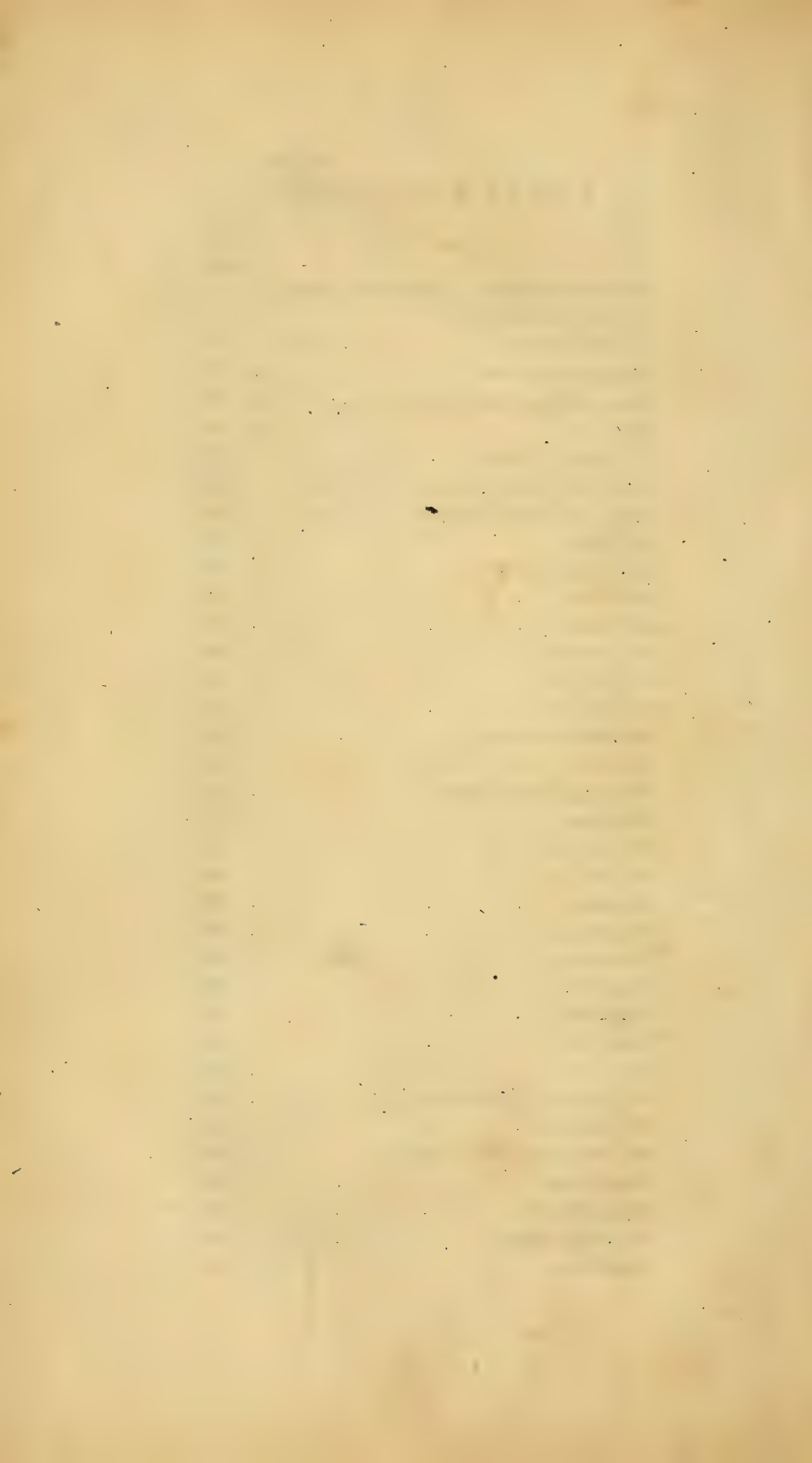
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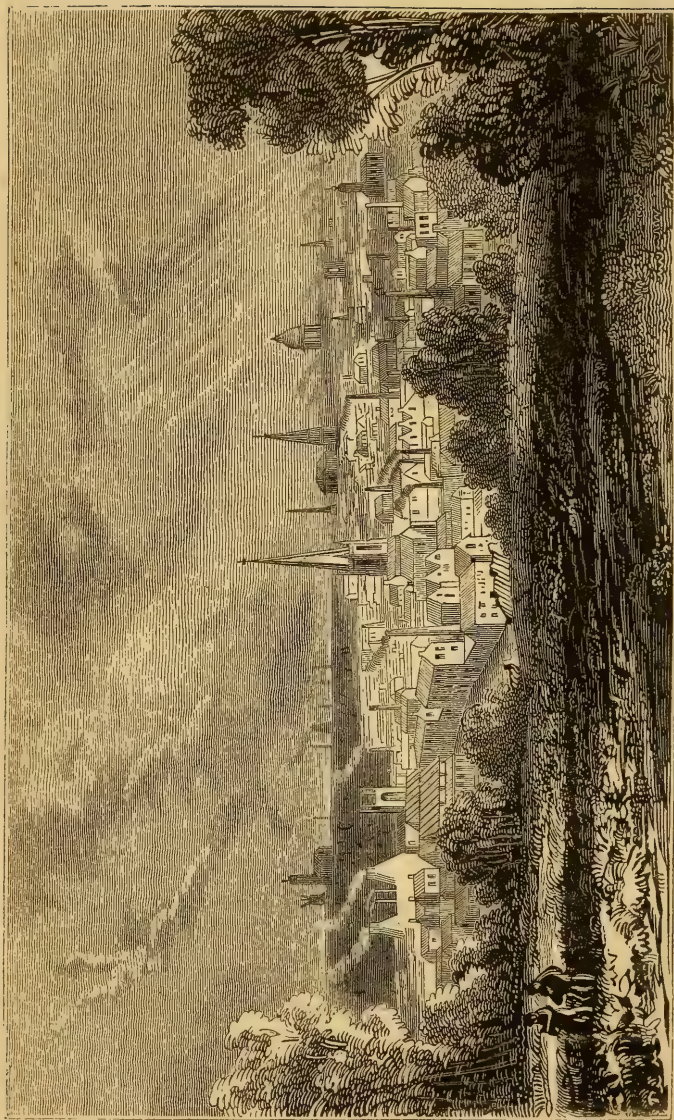
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A GENERAL VIEW OF BIRMINGHAM.

THE  
HISTORY OF BIRMINGHAM.

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*Name.*

THE word BIRMINGHAM, is too remote for certain explanation. During the last four centuries it has been variously written, *Brumwycheham*, *Bermyngeham*, *Bromwycham*, *Burmyingham*, *Bermyingham*, *Byrmyingham*, and *Birmingham*; nay, even so late as the seventeenth century it was written *Bromicham*. Dugdale supposes the name to have been given by the planter, or owner, in the time of the Saxons; but, I suppose it much older than any Saxon date: Besides, it is not so common for a man to give a name *to*, as to take one *from*, a place. A man seldom gives his name except he is the founder, as Petersburg from Peter the Great.

Towns, as well as every thing in nature, have exceedingly minute beginnings, and generally take a name from situation, or local circumstances. Would the lord of a manor think it an honour to give his name to two or three miserable huts? But if, in a succession of ages, these huts swell into opulence, they confer upon the lord an honour, a residence, and a name. The terminations of *stead*, *ham*, and *hurst*, are evidently Saxon, and mean the same thing, a *home*.

The word, in later ages reduced to a certainty, has undergone various mutations; but the original seems to have been *Bromwych*; *Brom* perhaps, from broom a shrub, for the growth of which the soil is extremely favourable; *Wych*, a dwelling, or a descent; this exactly corresponds with the declivity from the High Street, to Digbeth. Two other places in the neighbourhood bear the same name, Castle-Bromwich and West-Bromwich, which serves to strengthen the opinion.

Mr. Hamper says, "these derivations, however plausible, seem to have but little weight, when we consider that the Roman station, *Bremenium*, was on the Ikeneild Street, at this place. That word evidently bears a greater resemblance to the present Birmingham, than to Mr. Hutton's hypothetical *Bromwich*." Mr. Whitaker, the historian of Manchester says, "the name of *Bremenium* is composed from of *Bre* and *Maen*, the *High Stone*, and the site of it must therefore have been on the crest of the hill, at Birmingham. In the *liber niger* of the exchequer, it is written *Bremingeham*; and in a list of no less than *fifty* changes, which the fluctuation of orthography has caused in the name of our town, I find nothing to support Mr. Hutton's conjecture, previous to the year 1336, when *Burmyncham* occurs."

This infant colony, for many centuries after the first buddings of existence, perhaps, had no other appellation than that of *Bromwych*. Its centre, for many reasons that might be urged, was the Old Cross; which stood near the spot where Nelson's monument now stands. The increase of the town, in those early ages, must have been very small.

A series of prosperity attending it, its lord might assume its name, reside in it, and the particle *ham* would naturally follow. This very probably happened under the Saxon Heptarchy, and the name was no other than *Bromwycham*.



*Situation.*

It lies near the centre of the kingdom, in the north-west extremity of the county of Warwick, in a kind of peninsula, the northern part of which is bounded by Handsworth, in the county of Stafford, and the southern by King's-Norton, in that of Worcester. It is in the diocese of Lichfield and Coventry, in the deanery of Arden, and in the hundred of Hemlingford. Latitude  $52^{\circ} 59'$  north; longitude  $1^{\circ} 48'$  west from Greenwich. It is distant from London, one hundred and nine miles; Liverpool, ninety-six; Manchester, eighty-one; Sheffield, seventy-six; Bristol, eighty-seven; Warwick, twenty; Coventry, eighteen; Worcester, twenty-five; Dudley, nine; Wolverhampton, fourteen; Walsall, nine; and from Lichfield, fifteen.

Let us perambulate the parish from the bottom of Digbeth, thirty yards north of the bridge. We will proceed south-west up the bed of the old river, with Deritend, in the parish of Aston, on our left. Before we come to the flood-gates, near Vaughton's Hole, we pass by the Longmores, a small part of King's Norton. Crossing the river Rea, we enter the vestiges of a small rivulet, yet visible, though the stream has been turned, perhaps a thousand years, to supply the moat. At the top of the first meadow from the river Rea, we meet the little stream above mentioned, in the pursuit of which, we cross the Bromsgrove Road, a little east of the first mile stone. Leaving Banner's Marlpit to the left, we proceed up a narrow lane, crossing the Old Bromsgrove Road, and up to the turnpike at the Five Ways, in the road to Hales Owen. Leaving this road also to the left, we proceed down the lane, towards Ladywood, cross the Icknield Street, a stone's cast east of the observatory, to the north extremity of Rotton Park, which forms an acute angle,

near the Bear at Smethwick. From the river Rea to this point, is about three miles, rather west, and nearly in a straight line with Edgbaston on the left. We now bear north-east, about a mile, with Smethwick on the left till we meet Shirland Brook, in the Dudley Road; thence to Pigmill. We now leave Handsworth on the left, following the stream through Hockley Great Pool, cross the Wolverhampton Road, and the Ikenield Street at the same time down to Aston furnace, with that parish on the left. At the bottom of Walmer Lane we leave the water, move over the fields, nearly in a line to the post by the Peacock, upon Gosty Green. We now cross the Lichfield Road, down Duke Street, then the Coleshill Road at the A B House. From thence along the meadows to Cooper's Mill; up the river to the foot of Deritend Bridge, and then turn sharp to the right, keeping the course of a drain in the form of a sickle, through John-a-Dean's Hole into Digbeth, from whence we set out.

This little journey, nearly of an oval form, is about seven miles. The longest diameter from Shirland Brook to Deritend Bridge, is about three, and the widest, from the bottom of Walmer Lane to the rivulet, near the mile stone upon the Bromsgrove Road, more than two.

The superficial contents of the parish, is two thousand eight hundred and sixty-four acres. Birmingham is by much the smallest parish in the neighbourhood, those of Aston and Sutton are each about five times as large, Yardley four, and King's Norton eight. When Alfred, that great master of legislation, parished out his kingdom, or rather put the finishing hand to that important work, where he met with a town, he allotted a smaller quantity of land, because the inhabitants chiefly depended upon commerce; but where there was only a village, he allotted a larger, because they depended upon agriculture. This observation goes far in proving the antiquity of the place, for it is

nine hundred years since this division took effect. The buildings occupy the south-east part of the parish, which, with their appendages, are about eight hundred acres. This part being insufficient for the extraordinary increase of the inhabitants, she has of late extended her buildings along the Bromsgrove Road, near the boundaries of Edgbaston; and on the other side, planted many of her streets in the parish of Aston. Could the sagacious Alfred have seen into futurity, he would have augmented her borders.

As no part of the town lies flat, the showers promote both cleanliness and health, by removing obstructions. The approach is on every side by ascent, except that from Hales Owen, north-west, which gives a free access of air, even to the most secret recesses of habitation. Thus eminently situated, the sun can exercise his full powers of exhalation.

The foundation upon which this mistress of the arts is erected, is one solid mass of dry reddish sand. The vapours that rise from the earth are the great promoters of disease; but here, instead of the moisture ascending to the prejudice of the inhabitant, the contrary is evident; for the water descends through the pores of the sand, so that even our very cellars are habitable. Thus peculiarly favoured, this happy spot enjoys four of the greatest benefits that can attend human existence—water, air, the sun, and a situation free from damps.

All the *past* writers upon Birmingham have viewed her as low and watery, and with reason; because Digbeth, then the chief street, bears that description. But all the future writers will view her on an eminence, and with as much reason; because, for one low street, we have now fifty elevated. Birmingham, like the empire to which she belongs, has been, for many centuries, travelling *up hill*; and, like that, rising in consequence.



*Soil.*

The soil is rather light, sandy, and weak ; and though metals, of various sorts, are found in great plenty, *above* the surface, we know of nothing below, except sand and gravel, stone and water. All the riches of the place, like those of an empiric, in laced clothes, appear on the *outside*.

The northern part of the parish, consisting of seven hundred and eighty-seven acres, to the disgrace of the age, was a shameful waste, till the year 1800, when it was brought into cultivation, and is now some of the most valuable land in the parish. A small part of the land near the town, is parcelled out into little gardens, at ten or twenty shillings each, amounting to about sixteen pounds per acre. These are not intended so much for profit, as health and amusement. Others are let in detached pieces for private use, at about £4 per acre. So that this small parish cannot boast of more than six or eight farms, and these of the smaller size, at about £2 per acre. Manure from the sty brings about sixteen shillings per waggon load, that from the stable about twelve, and that from the fire and the street, five. In 1813, land let for £4 per acre, and manures were double what they were in 1782. In 1834, pasture land lets for £3 to £5 per acre ; manures are about twenty-five per cent cheaper than in 1813.

*Water.*

There is nonatural river runs through the parish, but there are three that mark its boundaries, for about half its circumference, described above ; none of these supply family use. After penetrating into a body of sand, interspersed with a small strata of soft rock, and sometimes of gravel ;

at the depth of about twenty yards, we come to plenty of water, rather hard. There are in the lower parts of the town, two excellent springs of soft water, suitable for most purposes; one at the top of Digbeth, the other Lady Well: or rather, one spring, or bed of water, with many outlets, continuing its course along the bottom of the hill, parallel with Smallbroke Street, Edgbaston Street, St. Martin's Lane, and Park Street, sufficiently copious to supply the whole City of London\*. Water is of the first consequence, it often influences disease, always the habit of body: that of Birmingham is in general productive of salutary effects.

### *Baths.*

At Lady Well are the most complete baths in the whole island. They are seven in number; erected at the expense of £2000. Accommodation is ever ready for hot or cold bathing; for immersion or amusement, with conveniency for sweating. That appropriated to swimming, is eighteen yards by thirty-six, situated in the centre of a garden, in which there are twenty-four private undressing-houses; the whole surrounded by a wall ten feet high. Pleasure and health are the guardians of the place. The gloomy horrors of a bath, sometimes deter us from its use, particularly if aided by complaint; but the appearance of these are rather inviting. We read of painted sepulchres, whose *outsides* are richly ornamented, but *within* are full of corruption and death. The reverse is before us. No elegance appears without, but within are the springs of life! In July, 1818, an attempt was made to prevent the public from having access to this ancient public well, but

\* In this our author is mistaken, for the supply is often limited in summer.

this was successfully resisted by the water carriers, aided by the interference of the town commissioners.

I do not know any author who has reckoned man among the amphibious race of animals, neither do I know any animal who better deserves it. Man is lord of the little ball on which he treads, one half of which, at least, is water. If we do not allow him to be amphibious, we deprive him of half his sovereignty. He justly bears that name, who can *live* in the water. Many of the disorders incident to the human frame are prevented, and others cured, both by fresh and salt bathing; so that we may properly remark, "*He lives in the water*, who can find life, nay, even *health* in that friendly element."

The greatest treasure on earth is health; but, a treasure, of all others, the least valued by the owner. Other property is best rated when in possession, but this, can only be rated when lost. We sometimes observe a man, who, having lost this inestimable jewel, seeking it with an ardour equal to its worth; but when every research by land is eluded, he fortunately finds it in the water. Like the fish, he pines away upon shore, but like that, recovers again in the deep.

The cure of disease among the Romans, by bathing, is supported by many authorities; among others by the number of baths frequently discovered, in which pleasure, in that warm climate, bore a part. But this practice seemed to decline with Roman freedom, and never after held the eminence it deserved. Can we suppose the physician stepped between the disease and the bath, to hinder their junction; or, that he lawfully holds, by prescription, the tenure of sickness, in *fee*?

The knowledge of this singular *art of healing*, is at present only in infancy. How far it may prevent or conquer disease; to what measure it may be applied, in particular cases, and the degrees of use, in different constitu-



tions, are inquiries that will be better understood by a future generation.

### *Chalybeate Spring.*

One mile from Birmingham, in the manor of Duddeston, and joining the turnpike road to Coleshill, is a chalybeate spring, whose water has but one defect—*it costs nothing*. This excellent spring lies forlorn, neglected, and exposed to every injury; it seems daily to solicit protection, and offer its friendly aid in restoring health; but being daily rejected, it seems to mourn the refusal, dissolve itself in tears, and not being allowed, though designed by nature, to increase the health of man, moves weeping along to increase a river. All the attention paid by the traveller is, to gaze for a moment, but in the height of contemplation, instead of taking *out* its water, deliver in his own. Had this water passed through a bed of malt instead of mineral, it would have drawn more attendants than the shrine of Thomas Becket, and those attendants would have stoutly disputed for every rising drop.

Poverty assumes a variety of shapes, it is sometimes seen in the human, sometimes in the horse at the coal-cart, again in the pulpit, in the furniture of a house, or a head. But in whatever shape it appears, it is always despised. The low state, and the low credit of this well are equal. Merit is often depressed. Here the afflicted might find a prescription without expense, efficacious as if signed by the whole College of Physicians. The stick and the crutch would be nailed round its margin, as trophies of victory over disease. The use of the bottle adds to the spirits, but shortens the life; this fountain is the renewer of health, the protractor of age. I remark, the water will lose some of its efficacy if carried off in any vessel but the stomach.

*Water-Works.*

Speculation, the main prop to commercial prosperity, never was carried to greater excess than in the years 1824-5. Companies were formed for a great variety of purposes, with golden prospects ; but the greater part, like the South-Sea Bubble, burst at the panic in December, 1825.\*

Mr. Hutton says the springs in Digbeth are sufficiently copious to supply the city of London: had he lived till 1834, he would have been convinced this opinion was fallacious: the supply having often failed in dry seasons, from the springs he mentions. All persons who have written upon Birmingham state the town to be well supplied with water; yet experience tells us many parts are ill supplied. The water generally obtained from pumps is hard, and therefore unfit for washing, and other domestic uses. The old mode of supplying soft water by carts and cans, being both inconvenient and uncertain, a company was formed in 1825, to remove this defect. An act, incorporating the shareholders, was obtained in May, 1826.

The authorised capital of the company is £120,000, in four thousand eight hundred shares of £25 each, with power to borrow £30,000 if required. The act provided that the estimated expense of £116,925 should be subscribed for, before the company commenced operations. This sum was not completed till 1830, when the works proceeded with the greatest activity, and are now in full operation. The supply of water is obtained from the river Tame, and a brook near Salford Bridge, in the parish of Aston. The works are erected on the right-hand side of the road to Lichfield, near the second mile stone. There are two reservoirs: one is formed on the

\* Six hundred and twenty-four were projected, requiring a capital of £372,173,000, of which £17,605,625 were actually advanced.—*Report upon Bank Charter.*

left-hand side of the road, a short distance beyond the works; and the other at Edgbaston, near the monument or Parrott's Folly, the residence of Dr. John Johnstone. The elevation of the latter is equal to the top of the Town Hall, and consequently water can be conveyed to the upper stories of the highest dwellings in Birmingham. These reservoirs are sufficiently capacious to contain a supply of water for the whole town for eight or ten weeks. Two beautiful engines of eighty-horse power each, are employed to force the water through iron pipes, thirty inches in diameter, from the lower reservoir to the one at Edgbaston, a distance of three or four miles, and to an elevation of eighty or ninety feet above the streams from whence the supply is obtained. The main pipes are constantly filled with water, and fire-plugs placed in every street. This regulation has been made available in many cases of fire with great advantage.

The water is suitable for every purpose, domestic or manufacturing. Publicans, brewers, malsters, &c. where large supplies are necessary, may use it to advantage as an unlimited quantity can be obtained, without the great labour requisite to raise it by the common pump. The first supply of water was served in the house of H. Merideth, St. Paul's Square, March, 1831.

The Charter empowers the Company to recover debts by distraint, and inflicts a fine of £5 for wasting water, or supplying others without permission from the company. The company is obliged to supply water to every person making a written application. The charges vary from nine shillings to two guineas per annum. Considerable sums are paid by the company to persons interested in the river from whence they draw their supply. Considering the great convenience, the purity of the water, and the low rates at which it is supplied, the company have not met with that encouragement that was reasonably to be

expected ; the prejudice against the establishment is fast declining, and it may ere long, be as extensively useful, as its most sanguine projectors desired.

### *Air.*

As we have passed through the water, let us now investigate her sister fluid, the air. They are both necessary to life, and the purity of both to the prolongation of it ; this small difference lies between them, a man may live a day without water, but not an hour without air. If a man wants better water, it may be removed from a distant place for his benefit ; but if he wants better air, he must remove himself. The natural air of Birmingham, perhaps, cannot be excelled in this climate, the moderate elevation and dry soil evinces this truth ; but it receives an alloy from the congregated body of one hundred and fifty thousand people, also from the smoke of an extraordinary number of fires used in business ; and perhaps more from the various effluvia arising from particular trades. It is not uncommon to see a man with green hair or a yellow wig, from his constant employment in brass ; if he reads, the green vestiges of his occupation remain on every leaf, never to be expunged. The inside of his body, no doubt, receives the same tincture, but is kept clean by being often washed with ale. Some of the fair sex, likewise, are subject to the same inconvenience, but find relief in the same remedy.

### *Longevity.*

Man is a time-piece—he measures out a certain space, then stops for ever. We see him move upon the earth, hear him click, and perceive in his countenance the marks of intelligence. His external appearance will inform us whether he is old-fashioned, in which case he is less valu-



able upon every gambling calculation. If we cast a glance upon his face, we shall learn, Whether all be right within ? and what portion of time has elapsed ? This curious machine is filled with a complication of movements, very unfit to be regulated by the rough hand of ignorance, which sometimes leaves a mark not to be obliterated even by the hand of an artist. If the works are directed by violence destruction is not far off. If we load it with the oil of luxury, it will give an additional vigour, but in the end, clog and impede the motion. But if the machine is under the influence of prudence, she will guide it with an even and a delicate hand, and perhaps the piece may move on till it is fairly worn out by a long course of fourscore years.

There is a set of people who expect to find that health in medicine, which possibly might be found in regimen, air, exercise, or serenity of mind.

There is another class among us, and that rather numerous, whose employment is laborious, and whose conduct is irregular. Their time is divided between hard working and hard drinking, and both by a fire. It is no uncommon thing to see one of these, at forty, wear the aspect of sixty ; and finish a life of violence at fifty, which the hand of prudence would have directed to eighty. The strength of a kingdom consists in the multitude of its inhabitants ; success in trade depends upon the manufacturer ; the support and direction of a family upon the head of it : when this useful part of mankind, therefore, is cut off in the active part of life, the community sustains a loss, whether we take the matter in a national, a commercial, or a private view.

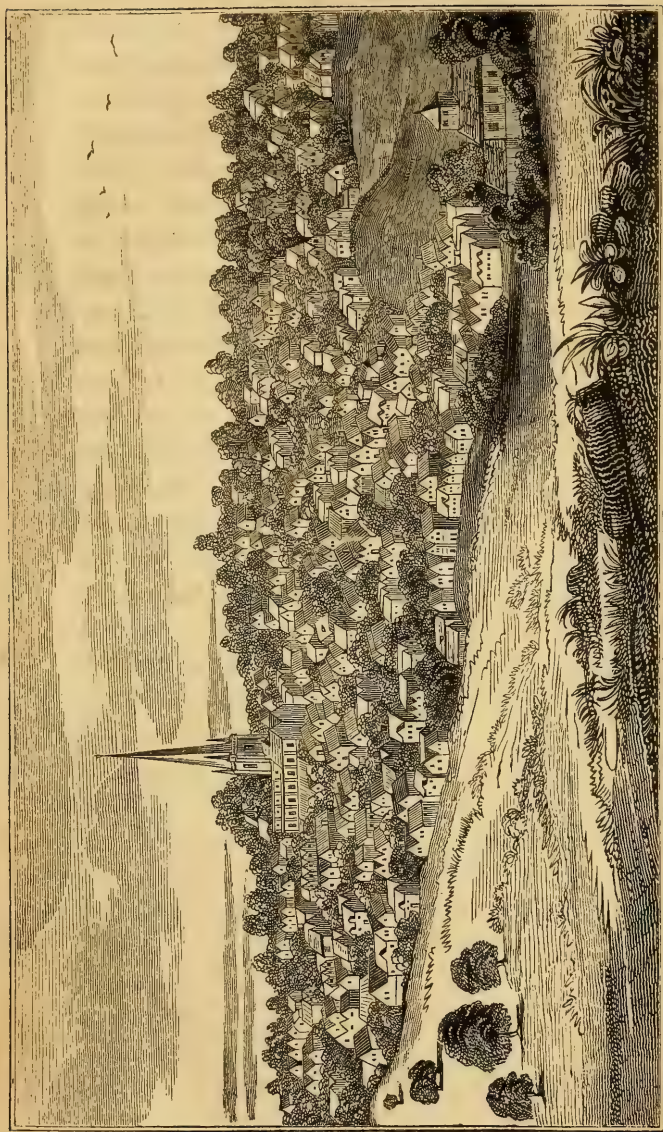
We have a third class, who shun the rock upon which these last fall, but wreck upon another ; they run upon Scylla though they have missed Charybdis ; they escape the liquid destruction, but split upon the solid. These

are proficient in good eating ; adepts in culling of delicacies, and the modes of dressing them. Masters of the whole art of cookery, each carries a kitchen in his head. Thus an excellent constitution may be stabbed by the spit. Nature never designed us to live well, and continue well—the stomach is too weak a vessel to be richly and deeply laden. Perhaps more injury is done by eating than by drinking, one is a secret, the other an open enemy ; the secret is always supposed the most dangerous. Drinking attacks by assault, eating by sap ; luxury is seldom visited by old age. The best antidote yet discovered against this kind of slow poison, is exercise ; but the advantages of elevation, air, and water, on one hand, and disadvantages of crowd, smoke, and effluvia on the other, are trifles compared to intemperance.

We have a fourth class, and with these I shall return and shut up the clock. If this valuable machine comes finished from the hand of nature ; if the rough blasts of fortune only attack the outward case, without affecting the internal works, and if reason conducts the piece, it may move on with a calm, steady, and uninterrupted pace, to a great extent of years, till time only annihilates the motion.

I personally know among us a Mrs. Dallaway, aged near ninety ; George Davis, eighty-five ; John Baddally, Esq., and his two brothers, all between eighty and ninety ; Mrs. Allen, eighty-eight ; Mrs. Silk, eighty-four ; John Burbury, eighty-four ; Thomas Rutter, eighty-eight ; Elizabeth Bentley, eighty-eight ; John Harrison and his wife, one eighty-six, the other eighty-eight ; Mrs. Floyd, eighty-seven ; Elizabeth Simms, eighty-eight ; Sarah Aston, ninety-eight ; Abraham Spooner, Esq., eighty-nine ; Joseph Scott, Esq., ninety-four ; all at this day, January 9, 1780, I believe enjoy health and capacity. This is not designed as a complete list of the aged, but of such only as immediately occur to memory. I also knew a John





BIRMINGHAM, AS IT APPEARED IN 1600.



England, who died at the age of eighty-nine ; Hugh Vincent, ninety-four ; John Pitt, one hundred ; George Bridgens, one hundred and three ; Mrs. More, one hundred and four. An old fellow assured me he had kept the market seventy-seven years : he kept it for several years after to my knowledge. At ninety he was attacked by an acute disorder, but, fortunately for himself, being too poor to purchase medical assistance, he was left to the care of nature, who opened that door to health which the physician would have locked for ever. At one hundred and six I heard him swear with all the fervency of a recruit—at one hundred and seven he died. To these we may add our author, (Mr. Hutton,) who breathed the air of Birmingham, seventy-four years, from 1741 to 1815, when he died at the age of ninety-two. It is easy to give instances of people who have breathed the smoke of Birmingham threescore years, and yet have scarcely quitted the precincts of youth. Such are the happy effects of constitution, temper, and conduct !

## ANCIENT STATE OF BIRMINGHAM.

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WE have now to pass through the very remote ages of time. The way is long, dark, and slippery. The credit of an historian is built upon truth ; he cannot assert, without giving his facts ; he cannot surmise, without giving his reasons ; he must relate things as they are, not as he would have them. The fabric founded in error will moulder of itself, but that founded in reality will stand the age and the critic.

Except half a dozen pages in Dugdale, I know of no author who has professedly treated of Birmingham. None of the histories which I have seen, bestow upon it more than a few lines, in which we are sure to be treated with the noise of hammers and anvils ; as if the historian thought us a race of dealers in thunder, lightning, and wind ; or infernals, puffing in blast and smoke.

Suffer me to transcribe a passage from Leland, one of our most celebrated writers, employed by Henry the VIII. to form an Itinerary of Britain, whose works have stood the test of two hundred and fifty years. We shall observe how little he must have been qualified to write the history of a place with only riding through it, one would think his horse nearly as well qualified as himself ; how much he erred for want of information, and how natural for his successors to copy him.

“ I came through a pretty street as ever I entered, into

Birmingham town. This street, as I remember is called Dirtey, (Deritend). In it dwells smithes and cutlers, and there is a brook that divides this street from Birmingham, an hamlet or member, belonging to the parish thereby. There is at the end of Dirtey a proper chappel, and mansion-house of tymber (the moat) hard on the ripe (bank) as the brook runneth down; and as I went through the ford, by the bridge, the water came down on the right hand, and a few miles below goeth into Tame. This brook, above Dirtey, breaketh in two arms, that a little beneath the bridge close again. This brook riseth, as some say, four or five miles above Birmingham, towards Black-hills.

“The beauty of Birmingham, a good market-town in the extreme parts of Warwickshire, is one street going up alonge, almost from the left ripe of the brook, up a meane hill, by the length of a quarter of a mile. I saw but one parish church in the town.

“There be many smithes in the town that use to make knives and all manner of cutting tools, and many loriners that make bittes, and a great many naylors; so that a great part of the town is maintained by smithes, who have their iron and sea-coal out of Staffordshire.”

Here we find some intelligence, and more mistake, clothed in the dress of antique diction, which plainly evinces the necessity of modern history.

It is matter of surprise, that none of those religious drones, the monks, who hived in the priory for fifteen or twenty generations, ever thought of indulging posterity with an history of Birmingham. They could not want opportunity, for they lived a life of indolence; nor materials, for they were nearer the infancy of time, and were possessed of historical facts now totally lost. Besides, nearly all the little learning in the kingdom was possessed

by this class of people ; and the place, in their day, must have enjoyed an eminent degree of prosperity.

Though the town has a modern appearance, there is reason to believe it of great antiquity ; my Birmingham reader, therefore, must suffer me to carry him back into the remote ages of the ancient Britons, to visit his sable ancestors.

We have no histories of those times but what are left us by the Romans, and these we ought to read with caution, because they were parties in the dispute. If two antagonists write each his own history, the discerning reader will draw the line of justice between them ; but where there is only one, partiality is expected. The Romans were obliged to make the Britons warlike, or there would have been no merit in conquering them ; they must also sound forth their ignorance, or there would have been none in improving them. If the Britons were that wretched people they are represented by the Romans, they could not be worth conquering ; no man subdues a people to improve them, but to profit by them. Though the Romans were in their meridian of splendour, they pursued Britain a whole century before they reduced it, which indicates that they considered it a valuable prize. Though the Britons were not masters of science, like the Romans, though the fine arts did not flourish as in Rome, because never planted, yet by many testimonies it is evident, they were masters of plain life ; that many of the simple arts were practised in that day, as well as in this ; that assemblages of people composed cities, the same as now, but in an inferior degree ; and that the country was populous, is plain from the immense army Boadicia brought into the field, except the Romans increased that army, that their merit might be greater in defeating it. Nay, I believe we may with propriety carry them beyond plain life, and charge them with a degree of elegance ; the



Romans themselves allow the Britons were complete masters of the chariot; that when the scythe was fixed at each end of the axle-tree, they drove with great dexterity into the midst of the enemy, broke their ranks, and mowed them down. The chariot probably was not made altogether for war, but when the scythes were removed, it remained an emblem of pride, became useful in peace, was a badge of high life, and *continues so with their descendants to this day.*

We know the instruments of war used by the Britons were a sword, spear, shield, and scythe. If they were not the manufacturers, how came they by these instruments? We cannot allow either they or the chariots were imported, because that will give them a much greater consequence. They must have been well acquainted with the tools used in husbandry, for they were masters of the field in a double sense. Bad also as their houses were, a chest of carpentry tools would be necessary to complete them. We cannot doubt from these evidences, and others which might be adduced, that the Britons understood the manufactory of iron. Perhaps history cannot produce an instance of any place in an improving country, like England, where the coarse manufactory of iron has been carried on, that ever that laborious art went to decay, except the materials failed; and as we know of no place where such materials have failed, there is the utmost reason to believe, our forefathers, the Britons, were supplied with those necessary implements by the black artists of the Birmingham forge. Iron-stone and coal are the materials for this production, both which are found in the neighbourhood in great plenty. [PLOT, in his Natural History of Staffordshire, hints that a decline had taken place in his day in the iron manufacture; and that the diminution of the woods was the cause. From which it also appears that wood was almost exclusively used in the smelting of iron ore, previously to the

seventeenth century, for we find a patent granted to one Dud Dudley, in 1622, for the purpose of making iron with coke, instead of charcoal. This will sufficiently explain why the woods have ceased to exist. See p. 32.]

The two following circumstances strongly evince this ancient British manufactory.

Upon the borders of the parish stands Aston furnace, appropriated for melting iron-stone, and reducing it into pigs; this has the appearance of great antiquity. From the melted ore, in this subterranean region of infernal aspect, is produced a calx or cinder, of which there is an enormous mountain. A few years ago a jeweller cut and polished some cinders from this place, and set them in rings, brooches, and other articles of jewellery, as fragments of *Pompey's pillar*: much money was made before the fraud was discovered. From an attentive survey, the observer would suppose so prodigious a heap could not accumulate in one hundred generations; however, it shews no perceptible addition in the age of man. This place is now changed into a paper manufactory.

There is also a common of vast extent, called Wednesbury Old Field, seven miles from Birmingham, in which are the vestiges of many hundreds of coal-pits, long in disuse, which the curious antiquarian would deem as long in sinking, as the mountain of cinders in rising.

The minute sprig of Birmingham, no doubt first took root in this black soil, which, in a succession of ages, has grown to its present opulence. At what time this prosperous plant was set, is very uncertain, perhaps as long before the days of Cæsar, as it is since. Thus the mines of Wednesbury empty their riches into the lap of Birmingham, and thus she draws nurture from the bowels of the earth.

The chief, if not the only manufactory of Birmingham, from its first existence to the restoration of Charles II.

was in iron : of this was produced instruments of war and of husbandry, furniture for the kitchen, and tools for the whole system of carpentry.

The places where our athletic ancestors performed these curious productions of art, were in the shops fronting the street. Some small remains of this very ancient custom were visible, chiefly in Digbeth, till within the last twenty years, where about a dozen shops still exhibited the original music of anvil and hammer. These ancient forges have now all retreated, as modern improvements have advanced.

As there is the highest probability that Birmingham produced her manufactures long before the landing of Cæsar, it would give pleasure to the curious inquirer, could he be informed of her size in these very early ages ; but this information is for ever hid from the historian and the reader. Perhaps there never was a period in which she saw a decline, but that her progress has been certain, though slow, during the long space of two or three thousand years before Charles II.

The very roads that proceed from Birmingham, are additional indications of her great antiquity and commercial influence. Where any of these roads lead up an eminence, they were worn by the long practice of ages into deep holloways, some of them twelve or fourteen yards below the surface of the banks, with which they were once even, and so narrow as to admit only one passenger.

Though modern industry, assisted by various turnpike acts, has widened the upper part, and filled up the lower, yet they were all visible in the days of our fathers, and are traceable even in ours. Some of these, no doubt, were formed by the spade, to soften the fatigue of climbing the hill, but many were owing to the pure efforts of time, the horse, and the showers. As inland trade was small prior to the fifteenth century, the use of the waggon, that great

destroyer of the road, was but little known. The horse was the chief conveyer of burden among the Britons, and for centuries after; if we, therefore, consider the great length of time it would take for the rains to form these deep ravages, we must place the origin of Birmingham at a very early date.

One of these subterranean passages, in part filled up, will convey its name to posterity in that of a street, called Holloway Head, till lately, the way to Bromsgrove and to Bewdley. Dale End, once a deep road, has the same derivation. Another at Summer Hill, in the Dudley Road, altered in 1753. A remarkable one is also between the Salutation and the turnpike, in the Wolverhampton Road. A fifth at the top of Walmer Lane, changed into its present form in 1764. Another between Gosta Green and Aston Brook, reduced in 1752. All the way from Dale End to Duddeston, of which Coleshill Street now makes a part, and Mile End another, was sunk five or six feet, though nearly upon a flat, till filled in 1756 by act of parliament; but the most singular is that between Deritend and Camp Hill, in the way to Stratford, which was fifty-eight feet deep, and is, even now, many yards below the banks; yet the seniors of the last age took a pleasure in telling us, they could remember when it would have buried a waggon load of hay beneath its present surface. Thus the traveller of old, who came to purchase the produce of Birmingham, or to sell his own, seemed to approach her by sap.

British traces are, no doubt, discoverable in the Old Dudley Road, down Easy Hill, under the canal; at the eight milestone, and at Smethwick; also in many of the private roads near Birmingham, which were never thought to merit a repair, particularly at Good Knavesend, towards Harborne; the Green Lane, leading to the Garrison; and that beyond Long Bridge, in the road to Yardley; all of



them deep holloways, which carry evident tokens of antiquity. Let the curious calculator determine what an amazing length of time would elapse in wearing the deep roads along Saltley Field, Shaw Hill, Allum Rock, and the remainder of the way to Stitchford, only, a pitiful hamlet of a dozen houses.

The ancient centre of Birmingham seems to have been the Old Cross, from the number of streets pointing towards it. Wherever the narrow end of a street enters a great thoroughfare, it indicates antiquity; this is the case with Philip Street, Bell Street, Spiceal Street, Park Street, and Moor Street, which not only incline to the centre abovementioned, but terminate with their narrow ends into the grand passage. These streets are confined at the entrance, and widen as they proceed. The narrow ends were formed with the main street at first, and were not intended for streets themselves. As the town increased, other blunders of the same kind were committed, witness the gateway late at the east-end of New Street, the two ends of Worcester Street, Smallbroke Street, Cannon Street, New Meeting Street, and Bull Street. It is easy to see which end of a street was formed first; perhaps the south end of Moor Street is two thousand years older than the north; the same errors are committing in our day, as in Hill and Vale Streets, the two Hinkleys; and Stafford Street, a great thoroughfare, and the principal road leading to the north of England, remained the narrowest carriage road in Birmingham, till 1831, when it was widened to the end of Tanter Street, by removing the buildings on both sides of the street. One generation, for want of foresight, forms a narrow entrance, and another widens it by act of parliament.

Every word in the English language carries an idea. When a word strikes the ear, the mind immediately forms a picture, which represents it as faithfully as the looking-

glass does the face. Thus, when the word Birmingham occurs, a superb picture instantly expands in the mind, which is best explained by the other words grand, populous, extensive, active, commercial, and humane. This painting is an exact counterpart of the word at this day; but it does not correspond with its appearance, in the days of the ancient Britons—we must, therefore, for a moment, detach the idea from the word.

Let us suppose, then, this centre surrounded with less than one hundred straggling huts, without order, which we will dignify with the name of houses, built of timber, the interstices wattled with sticks, and plaistered with mud, covered with thatch, boards or sods, none of them higher than the ground story. The meaner sort only one room, which served for three uses, shop, kitchen, and lodging-room; the door for two, it admitted the people and the light. The better sort two rooms, and some three, for work, for the kitchen, and for rest; all three in a line, and sometimes fronting the street.

If the curious reader chooses to see a picture of Birmingham, in the time of the Britons, he will find one in the turnpike road, between Hales Owen and Stourbridge, called the Lie Waste, alias Mud City. The houses stand in every direction, composed of one large and ill-formed brick, scoped into a tenement, burnt by the sun, and often destroyed by the frost. The males naked, the females accomplished breeders. The children at the age of three months, take a singular hue from the sun and the soil, which continues for life. The rags which cover them leave no room for the observer to guess at the sex. Only one person upon the premises presumes to carry a belly, and he a landlord. We might as well look for the moon in a coalpit, as for stays or white linen in the City of Mud. The principal tool in business is the hammer, and the beast of burden the ass.

The extent of our little colony of artists, perhaps reached nearly as high as the east-end of New Street, occupied the upper part of Spiceal Street, and penetrated down the hill to the top of Digbeth, chiefly on the east.

Success, which ever waits on industry, produced a gradual but very slow increase ; perhaps a thousand years elapsed without adding half that number of houses.

Thus our favourite plantation having taken such firm root, that she was able to stand the wintry blasts of fortune, we shall digress for a moment, while she wields her sparkling heat, according to the fashion of the day, in executing the orders of the sturdy Briton, then of the polite and heroic Roman, afterwards of our mild ancestors, the Saxons. Whether she raised her hammer for the plundering Dane is uncertain, his reign being short, and lastly, for the resolute and surly Norman.

It does not appear that Birmingham, from its first formation, to the present day, was ever the habitation of a gentleman, the lords of the manor excepted. But if there are no originals among us, we can produce many striking likenesses : The smoke of Birmingham has been very propitious to their growth, but not to their maturity. Gentlemen, as well as buttons, have been stamped here ; but, like them, when finished, are moved off. They both originate from a very uncouth state, *without form or comeliness* ; and pass through various stages, uncertain of success. Some of them, at length, receive the last polish, and arrive at perfection, while others, ruined by a flaw, are deemed *wasters*. I have known the man of opulence direct his gilt chariot *out* of Birmingham, who first approached her an helpless orphan in rags. I have known the chief magistrate of fifty thousand people, fall from his phaeton, and humbly ask bread at a parish vestry. Frequently the wheel of capricious fortune describes a circle, in the rotation of which a family experiences, alternately,

the height of prosperity and the depth of distress ; but more frequently, like a pendulum, it describes only the ark of a circle, and that always at the bottom.

Many fine estates have been struck out of the anvil, valuable possessions raised by the tongs, and superb houses, in a two-fold sense, erected by the trowel. The paternal ancestor of the late Sir Charles Holte was a native of this place, and purchaser, in the beginning of Edward the Third, of the several manors which have been the honour and the support of his house to the present time. Walter Clodshale was another native of Birmingham, who in 1332, purchased the manor of Saltley, now enjoyed by his maternal descendant, Charles Bowyer Adderley, Esq. Charles Colmore, Esq. holds a considerable estate in the parish ; his predecessor is said to have occupied, in the reign of Henry the Eighth, that house, now No. 1, in the High Street, as a mercer, and general receiver of the taxes. A numerous branch of this ancient family flourishes in Birmingham at this day. The head of it, in the reign of James I. erected New Hall, and himself into a gentleman. On this desirable eminence, about half a mile from the buildings, they resided till time, fashion, and success removed them, like their predecessors, the sons of fortune, to a greater distance. The place was then possessed by a tenant, as a farm, but Birmingham, a speedy traveller, marched over the premises, and covered them with twelve hundred houses, on building leases ; the farmer was converted into a steward ; his brown hempen frock, which guarded the *outside* of his waistcoat, became white holland, edged with ruffles, and took its station *within*. The pitchfork was metamorphosed into a pen, and his ancient practice of breeding up sheep, was changed into that of *dressing their skins*. Robert Philips, Esq. acquired a valuable property in the seventeenth century, now possessed by his descendant, William Theodore Inge,



Esq. A gentleman of the name of Foxall, assured me, that the head of his family resided upon the spot, now No. 101, in Digbeth, about four hundred years ago, in the capacity of a tanner. Richard Smallbroke, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, in the reign of George II. was a native of Birmingham, as his ancestors were for many ages, with reputation. He was born at No. 19, in the High Street, had great property in the town, now enjoyed by his descendants, though they have left the place. The families also of Weaman, Jennens, Whalley, &c. have acquired vast property, and quitted the meridian of Birmingham; and some others are at this day ripe for removal. Let me close this bright scene of prosperity, and open another, which can only be viewed with a melancholy eye. We cannot behold the distresses of man without compassion; but that distress which follows affluence, comes with double effect.

We have among us a family of the name of Middlemore, of great antiquity, deducible from the conquest; who held the chief possessions, and the chief offices in the county, and who matched into the first families in the kingdom, but fell with the interest of Charles the First; and are now in that low ebb of fortune, that I have frequently, with a gloomy pleasure, relieved them at the common charity board of the town. Such is the tottering point of human greatness. Another of the name of Bracebridge, who, for more than six hundred years, figured in the first ranks of life. A third of the name of Mountfort, who shone with meridian splendour, through a long train of ages. As genealogy was ever a favourite amusement, I have often conversed with these solitary remains of tarnished lustre, but find in all of them, the pride of their family buried with its greatness—they pay no more attention to the arms of their ancestors, than to a scrap of paper, with which they would light their pipe. Upon

consulting one of the name of Elwall, said to be descended from the Britons, I found him so amazingly defective, that he could not stretch his pedigree even so high as his grandfather. A fifth family among us, of the name of Arden, stood upon the pinnacle of fame in the days of Alfred the Great, where, perhaps they had stood for ages before. They continued the elevation about seven hundred years after, but having treasonable charges brought against them, in the days of Queen Elizabeth, about two hundred years ago, they were thrown from this exalted eminence, and dashed to pieces in the fall. In various consultations with a member of this honourable house, I found the greatness of his family not only lost, but the memory of it also. I assured him, that his family stood higher in the scale of honour, than any private one within my knowledge; that his paternal ancestors, for about seven generations, were successively Earls of Warwick, before the Norman conquest. That, though he could not boast a descent from the famous Guy, he was related to him, and still bore his arms, with a small difference. That, though Turchell, Earl of Warwick, at the conquest, his direct ancestor, lost the Earldom in the favour of Roger Newburgh, a favourite of William's; yet, as the Earl did not appear in arms, against the Conqueror, at the battle of Hasting, nor oppose the new interest, he was allowed to keep forty-six of his manors; and that he retired upon his own vast estate, which he held in dependence, where the family resided with great opulence, in one house, for many centuries. He received the information with some degree of amazement, and replied with a serious face,—“Perhaps there may have been something great in my predecessors, for my grandfather kept several cows in Birmingham, and sold milk!”

The families of those ancient heroes, of Saxon and Norman race, are chiefly by the mutations of time, and

of state, either become extinct, or as above, reduced to the lowest verge of fortune. Those few, therefore, whose descent is traceable, may be carried higher than that of the present nobility ; for I know none of these last, who claim peerage beyond Edward the First, about 1295. Hence it follows, that for antiquity, alliance, and blood, the advantage is evidently in favour of the lowest class.

Could one of those illustrious shades return to the earth and inspect human actions, he might behold one of his descendants dancing at the lathe ; another, tipping with his dark brethren of the apron ; a third, humbly soliciting from other families, such favours as were formerly granted by his own ; a fourth, imitating modern grandeur, by contracting debts he never designs to pay ; and a fifth, snuff of departed light, poaching, like a thief in the night, upon the very manors possessed by his ancestors.

Whence is it that title, pedigree, and alliance, in superior life, are esteemed of the highest value, while in the inferior, who have a prior claim, are totally neglected ? The grand design of every creature upon earth, is to supply the wants of nature. No amusements of body or mind can be adopted, till hunger is served. When the appetite calls, the whole attention of the animal, with all its powers, is bound to answer. Hence arise those dreadful contests in the brute creation, from the lion in the woods, to the dog who seizes the bone. Hence the ship, when her provisions are spent, and she becalmed, casts a savage eye upon human sacrifices ; and hence, the attention of the lower ranks of men, is too far engrossed for mental pursuit. They see, like Esau, the honours of their family devoured with a ravenous appetite. A man with an empty cupboard would make but a wretched philosopher. But if fortune should smile upon one of the lower race, raise him a step above his original standing, and

give him a prospect of independence, he immediately begins to eye the arms upon carriages, examines old records for his name, and inquires where the Herald's Office is kept. Thus, when the urgency of nature is set at liberty, the bird can whistle upon the branch, the fish play upon the surface, the goat skip upon the mountain, and even man himself, can bask in the sunshine of science.

We have several families, as the Colmores, the Clarkes, the Mays, the Smallwoods, the Bedfords, through whose veins flow the blood-royal of England, with that of most of the European princes. For these families being descended from the Willoughbies, and they from the Mermions, whose daughter married Richard, bastard son of King John, brings up our laboured pedigree to a sceptre and a crown. From thence, as by a spacious turnpike road, we easily travel through the great names of antiquity, as William the Conqueror, Edmund Ironside, the accomplished Alfred, the powerful Egbert, the beloved Cerdie, till we arrive at the Saxon Deity *Woden*, whence our Wednesday. I digress no farther.

The situation of St. Martin's church is another reason for fixing the original centre of Birmingham at the Old Cross. Christianity made an early and a swift progress in this kingdom; persecution, as might be expected, followed her footsteps, increased her votaries, and, as was ever the case, in all new religions, her proselytes were very devout. The religious fervour of the christians displayed itself in building churches. Most of those in England are of Saxon original, and were erected between the fourth and the tenth century; that of St. Martin's is ancient beyond the reach of historical knowledge, and probably rose in the early reigns of the Saxon kings.

It was the custom of those times, to place the church, if there was but one, out of the precincts of the town,



this is visible at the present day in those places which have received no increase.

Perhaps it will not be an unreasonable supposition to fix the erection of St. Martin's in the eighth century, and if the inquisitive reader chooses to traverse the town a second time, he may find its boundaries something like the following. We cannot allow its extension northward beyond the east end of New Street, that it included the narrow parts of Philip Street, Bell Street, Spiceal Street, Moor Street, and Park Street. That the houses at this period were more compact than heretofore; that Digbeth and Deritend, lying in the road to Stratford, Warwick, and Coventry, all places of antiquity, were now formed. Thus the church stood in the environs of the town, unincumbered with buildings. Possibly this famous nursery of arts might, by this time, produce six hundred houses. A town must increase before its appendages are formed, those appendages also must increase before there is a necessity for an additional chapel, and after that increase, the inhabitants may wait long before that necessity is removed, by building one. Deritend is an appendage to Birmingham, the inhabitants of this hamlet having long laboured under the inconveniency of being remote from the parish church of Aston, and too numerous for admission into that of Birmingham, procured a grant in 1381 to erect a chapel of their own. If we, therefore, allow three hundred years for the infancy of Deritend, three hundred more for her maturity, and four hundred since the erection of her chapel, which is a very reasonable allowance; it will bring us to the time I mentioned.

It does not appear that Deritend was attended with any considerable augmentation, from the Norman Conquest to the year 1767, when a turnpike road was opened to Alcester, and when Henry Bradford publicly offered a

freehold to the man who should first build upon his estate; since which time, Deritend, only one street, has made a rapid progress; and this dusky offspring of Birmingham is now travelling apace along her new formed road.

I must again recline upon Dugdale. In 1309, William de Birmingham, lord of the manor, took a distress of the inhabitants of Bromsgrove and King's Norton, for refusing to pay the customary tolls of the market. The inhabitants, therefore, brought their action and recovered damage, because it is said, their lands being the ancient demesne of the crown, they had a right to sell their produce in any market in the King's dominions. It appeared in the course of the trial, that the ancestors of William de Birmingham had a MARKET HERE before the Norman Conquest! I shall have occasion, in future, to resume this remarkable expression. I have also met with an old author, who observes, that Birmingham was governed by two constables in the time of the Saxons, small places have seldom more than one. These evidences prove much in favour of the government, population, and antiquity of the place.

In Domesday-book it is rated at four hides of land. A hide was as much as a team could conveniently plough in a year, perhaps about fifty acres. I think there are not now more than two hundred ploughed in the parish. It was also said to contain woods of half a mile in length, and four furlongs in breadth. What difference subsisted between half a mile and four furlongs, in ancient time, is uncertain, we know of none now. The mile was reduced to its present standard in the reign of Queen Elizabeth; neither are there the least traces of those woods, for at this day it is difficult to find a stick that deserves the name of a tree, in the whole manor. Timber is no part of the manufactory of Birmingham.

Let us survey the town a third time, as we may reasonably suppose it stood in the most remarkable period of English history, that of the conquest.

We cannot yet go farther north of the centre than before, that is, along the High Street, till we meet the east end of New Street. We shall penetrate rather farther into Moor Street, none into Park Street, take in Digbeth, Deritend, and Edgbaston Street, as being the road to Dudley, Bromsgrove, and the whole West of England; Spiceal Street, the Shambles, a larger part of Bell Street, and Philip Street.

The ancient increase of the town was towards the south, because of the great road, the conveniency of water, the church, and the manor-house, all which lay in that quarter; but the modern extension was chiefly towards the north, owing to the scions of her trades being transplanted all over the country as far as Wednesbury, Walsall, and Wolverhampton. But particularly her vicinity to the coal delphs, which were ever considered as the soul of her prosperity. Perhaps by this time the number of houses might have been augmented to seven hundred: but whatever were her number, either in this or any other period, we cannot doubt her being populous in every era of her existence.

The following small extract from the register, will shew a gradual increase, even before the restoration:

Year.	Christenings.	Weddings.	Burials.
1555	37	15	27
1558	48	10	47
1603	65	14	40
1625	76	18	47
1660	76 from April to Dec. inclusive.		

In 1251, William de Birmingham, lord of the manor, procured an additional charter from Henry the III., in the

thirty-fifth year of his reign, reviving some decayed privileges, and granting others ; among the last was that of the Witsuntide Fair, to begin on the eve of Holy Thursday, and to continue four days. At the alteration of the style, in 1752, it was prudently changed to the Thursday in Whitsun week ; that less time might be lost to the injury of work and the workman. He also procured another fair, to begin on the eve of St. Michael, and continue for three days. Both which fairs are at this day in great repute. In a work published in 1830, Mr. Hutton is charged with originating an error respecting the dates of the charters for these fairs, but without the slightest foundation ; in all the editions of this work, the dates are as given above, agreeing both with Dugdale and the work above named.

By the interest of Audomore de Valance, Earl of Pembroke, a licence was obtained from the crown, in 1319, to charge an additional toll upon every article sold in the market for three years, towards paving the town. Every quarter of corn to pay one farthing, and other things in proportion. But at the expiration of the term, the toll was found inadequate to the expense, and the work lay dormant for eighteen years, till 1337, when a second licence was obtained, equal to the first, which completed the intention.

Those streets thus dignified with a pavement, or rather their sides, to accommodate the foot passenger, probably were High Street, the Bull Ring, Corn Cheaping, Digbeth, St. Martin's Lane, Moat Lane, Edgbaston Street, Spiceal Street, and part of Moor Street. It was the practice, in those early days, to leave the centre of a street unpaved, for the easier passage of carriages and horses ; the consequence was, in flat streets the road became extremely dirty, almost impassable, and in a descent, the soil was quickly worn away, and left a causeway on each side. Many instances of this ancient practice are within memory.



The streets, no doubt, in which the fairs were held, mark the boundaries of the town in the thirteenth century. Though smaller wares were sold upon the spot used for the market, the rougher articles, such as cattle, were exposed to sale in what were then the *out-streets*. The fair for horses was held in Edgbaston Street, and that for beasts in the High Street, tending towards the Welch Cross.—Inconvenient as these streets seem for the purpose, our dark ancestors, of peaceable memory, found no detriment, during the infant state of population, in keeping them there. But we, their crowded sons, for want of accomodation, have wisely removed both; the horse fair, in 1777, to Brick-kiln Lane, now the extreme part of the town; and that for beasts, in 1769, into the open part of Dale End. Whatever veneration we may entertain for ancient custom, there is sometimes a necessity to break it. Were we now to solicit the crown for a fair, those streets would be the last we should fix on.

If we survey Birmingham in the twelfth century, we shall find her crowded with timber, within and without; her streets dirty and narrow, but much trodden. The inhabitant became an early encroacher upon her narrow streets, and sometimes the lord was the greatest. Her houses were mean and low, but few reaching higher than one story, perhaps none more than two; composed of wood and plaister—she was a stranger to brick. Her public buildings consisted solely of one, *the church*. If we behold her in the fourteenth century, we shall observe her private buildings multiplied more than improved; her narrow streets, by trespass, become narrower; her public buildings increased to four, two in the town and two at a distance, the Priory, of stone, founded by contribution, at the head of which stood her lord; the Guild, of timber, now the Free School; and Deritend Chapel, of the same materials, resembling a barn, with something like an

awkward dove-cot, at the west end, by way of steeple. All these will be noticed in due course. If we take a view of the inhabitants, we shall find them industrious, plain, and honest. In curious operations, known only to a few, the artist was amply paid. Nash, in his History of Worcestershire, gives us a curious list of anecdotes, from the churchwardens' ledger, of Hales-Owen. I shall transcribe two, nearly three hundred years old. "*Paid for bread and ale, to make my Lord Abbot drink, in Rogation week, 2d.*" What should we now think of an ecclesiastical nobleman, accepting a two-penny treat from a country churchwarden?—This displays an instance of moderation in a class of people famous for luxury. It shows also the amazing reduction of money: the same sum which served my Lord Abbot four days, would now be devoured by a journeyman in four minutes.—"1498, *paid for repeyling the organs, to the organ-maker at Bromicham, 10s.*" Birmingham then, we find discovered the powers of genius in the finer arts, as well as in iron. By "*the organ-maker,*" we should suppose there was but one. It appears that the art of acquiring riches was as well understood by our fathers, as by us; while an artist could receive as much money for tuning an organ, as would purchase an acre of land, or treat near half a gross of Lord Abbots.

## BATTLE OF CAMP HILL, 1643.

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CLARENDON, in his History of the Rebellion, reproaches with virulence, our spirited ancestors for disloyalty to *Charles the I.* The day after the king left Birmingham, on his march from Shrewsbury, in October, 1642, a few days before the first battle between the king and parliament, which was fought at Edge Hill, on the 23rd of that month, they seized his carriages, containing the royal plate and furniture, which they conveyed for security to Warwick Castle. They apprehended all messengers and suspected persons ; frequently attacked and reduced small parties of the royalists, whom they sent prisoners to Coventry. Hence the proverbial expression to a refractory person, *Send him to Coventry.*

Clarendon thus describes the conduct and character of the people of Birmingham : “ There was not the least violence or disorder among the common soldiers in their march, which ’scaped exemplary punishment, so that at *Bromicham*, a town so generally wicked, that it had risen upon small parties of the king’s, and killed or taken them prisoners, and sent them to *Coventry* declaring a more peremptory malice to his majesty than any other place, two soldiers were executed for having taken some trifle of no value out of a house, whose owner was at that time in the rebel’s army.”

In the beginning of April, 1643, the king ordered Prince

Rupert, with a detachment of one thousand two hundred horse, and six or seven hundred foot, to open a communication between Oxford and York. In his march to Birmingham, he found a company of foot, kept for the parliament, lately reinforced by a troop of horse, from the garrison at Lichfield : but supposing they would not resist a power of ten to one, sent his quarter-masters to demand lodging, and offer protection. But the sturdy sons of freedom having cast up slight works at each end of the town, and barricaded the lesser avenues, rejected the offer and the officers. The military uniting in one small and compact body, assisted by the inhabitants, were determined the king's forces should not enter. Their little fire opened on the prince ; but bravery itself, though possessed of an excellent spot of ground for defence, was obliged to give way to numbers. The prince quickly put them to silence ; yet, under the success of his own arms, he was not able to enter the town, for the inhabitants had choked up with carriages, the deep and narrow road, then between Deritend and Camp Hill, which obliged the prince to alter his route to the left, and proceed towards Long Bridge. The spirit of resistance was not yet broken ; they sustained a second attack, but to no purpose except that of slaughter. A running fight continued through the town ; victory declared loudly for the prince ; the retreat became general : part of the vanquished took the way to Oldbury. William Fielding, Earl of Denbigh, a volunteer under the prince, being in close pursuit of an officer in the service of the parliament, and both upon the full gallop, up Shirland Lane, in the manor of Smethwick, the officer instantly turning, discharged a pistol at the earl, and mortally wounded him with a random shot. The parliament troops were animated in the engagement by a clergyman, who acted as governor, but being taken in the defeat, and refusing quarter, was killed in the Red Lion Inn. The prince provoked at the



resistance, in revenge set fire to the town. His wrath is said to have kindled in Bull Street, and consumed several houses near the spot, now No. 12. He obliged the inhabitants to quench the flames with a heavy fine, to prevent farther military execution. Part of the fine is said to have been shoes and stockings for his people. The parliament forces had formed their camp in that well chosen angle which divides the Stratford and Warwick roads upon Camp Hill.\* The victorious prince left no garrison, because their insignificant works were untenable; but left an humbled people, and marched to the reduction of Lichfield.

The following is transcribed from Clarendon's History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England, published at Oxford, 1707: "At the beginning of April 1643, the king ordered Prince Rupert to march towards Lichfield; in his way thither he was to march through *Bromicham*, a town in Warwickshire before mentioned, and of as great fame for hearty, wilful, affected disloyalty to the king, as any place in England. It is before remembered, that the king in his march from Shrewsbury, notwithstanding the eminent malignity of that people, had shewed as eminent compassion to them; not giving way that they should suffer by the undistinguishing licence of the soldier, or by the severity of his own justice; which clemency of his found so unequal a return, that, the next day after his remove thence, the inhabitants of that place seized on his carriages, wherein were his own plate and furniture, and conveyed them to Warwick Castle, and had from that time with unusual industry and vigilance, apprehended all messengers who were employed, or suspected to be so, in the king's service; and though it was never made a garrison by direction of the parliament, being built in such a form as

\* A cannon ball, said to have been found at Camp Hill, weighing upwards of six pounds, and which is twelve inches in circumference, is now in the possession of the Hutton family.

was indeed hardly capable of being fortified, yet they had so great a desire to distinguish themselves from the king's good subjects, that they cast up little slight works at both ends of the town, and barricaded the rest, and voluntarily engaged themselves not to admit any intercourse with the king's forces. In this posture Prince Rupert now found them, having in the town with them at that time a troop of horse, belonging to the garrison of Lichfield, which was grown to that strength, that it infested those parts exceedingly, and would in a short time have extended itself to a powerful jurisdiction. His highness hardly believing it possible, that when they should discover his power they would offer to make resistance, and being unwilling to receive interruption in his more important design, sent his quarter masters thither to take up his lodging, and to assure them, that if they behaved themselves peaceably, they should not suffer for what was past. But they had not confidence good enough to believe him, and absolutely refused to let him quarter in the town, and from their little works, with mettle equal to their malice, they discharged their shot upon him; but they were quickly overpowered, and some parts of the town being fired, they were not able to contend with both enemies; and distracted between both, suffered the assailants to enter without much loss; who took not that vengeance upon them they deserved, but made them expiate their transgressions with paying a less mulct than might have been expected from their wealth, if their wickedness had been less.

“In the entrance of this town, and in the too eager pursuit of that loose troop of horse that was in it, the Earl of Denbigh, (who from the beginning of the war, with unwearied pains and exact submission to discipline and order, had been a volunteer in Prince Rupert's troop, and been engaged with singular courage in all enterprizes of danger,) was unfortunately wounded with many hurts on the head

and body, and with swords and poleaxes, of which, within two or three days he *died*.

“ Had it not been for this ill accident (and to remember the dismal inequality of this contention, in which always some earl, or person of great honour or fortune fell, when after the most signal victory over the other side, there was seldom lost a man of any known family, or of other reputation, than of passion for the cause in which he fell,) I should not have mentioned an action of so little moment, as was this of Bromicham, which I shall enlarge with the remembrance of a clergyman, who was here killed at the entering of the town, after he had not only refused quarter, but provoked the soldiers by the most odious revilings and reproaches of the person and honour of the king that can be imagined, and renouncing all allegiance to him ; in whose pockets were found several papers of memorials of his own obscene and scurrilous behaviour with several women, in such loose expressions as modest ears cannot endure. This man was the principal governor and incendiary of the rude people of that place against their sovereign.”

Mr. Hutton was not aware of the existence of three tracts, published in 1643, immediately after the battle of Birmingham, or he would no doubt have mentioned them. They were reprinted in 1815, for Beilby, Knott and Beilby, and are mentioned in the fourth edition of the History of Birmingham, published by Catherine Hutton, in 1819 ; and as they contain the most authentic information relative to the battle of Birmingham, we shall here insert them at full length, and leave our readers to judge between the contending parties.

*A True Relation of Prince Rupert's Barbarous Cruelty  
against the Towne of Brumingham,*

To which place on Monday Apr. 3, 1643, he marcht with 2000 horse and foot, 4 Drakes, and 2 Sakers; where after two houres fight (being twice beaten off by the Townsmen, in all but 140 Musqueteers) he entered, put divers to the Sword, and burnt about 80 Houses to ashes, suffering no man to carry away his goods, or quench the fire, and making no difference between friend or foe; yet by God's providence the greatest losse fell on the malignants of the Town.

And of the Cavaliers were slaine divers chiefe Commanders, and men of great quality, amongst whom was the Earle of Denbigh, the Lord John Stewart: and as themselves report, the Lord Digby.

*London: Printed for John Wright in the Old-baily,  
April 12, 1643.*

SIR,

THOUGH I can write you but the same lamentation which I believe you have already heard, yet I cannot be silent to acquaint you of the truth as neere as I can; If Coventrey had sent us what helpe it might, I beleeeve the enemy durst not have assaulted us, but in regard they had been in danger of cutting off by the way, in case they had been sent, I must excuse them, though it be to our owne suffering. We with the Captaines were sensible, that if the Cavaliers came, we were not likely to withstand them, they being neere 1500, and we not above 150 Musketiers, with a Troope of Horse of Captaine Greaves, which did no good but in their flight, as hereafter you will heare; but in regard the generall desire of the Towne, especially of those that bore Armes, would have them stand it out, and not march away with their Armes, as we might in time, and that both they, and the malignant would have reviled, and curst the Captaines and Majestrates of the Towne if they had left them, made the Captaines and better sort content to stay and trie the issue, rather then



be so perpetually reproacht. And though the same fall hard on our side in loosing the Towne and some Armes, and about 80 Houses burnt to ashes, with all that therein was, and some fifteen men, and two women lost their lives, yet their gaine was nothing at all, yea, they count it greater losse and curse the time that ever they medled with us, for I believe they lost as many ordinary men as we, besides three men of great quality which they much lament, whereof two of them were Lords, as we have great cause to thinke, the one the Earle of Denby that's sure, the other Lord we something doubt of his name, but we heare by divers of the Cavaliers it is Digby, sure we are he is wounded ; and it is as sure that some of their Collonels say it was a man of greater ranke, and more considerable then Denby ; the other a chiefe Commander ; Denby pursued Captaine Greaves Troope some two Miles out of Towne being at their heeles, before our Troope departed, among whom I went away, and Captaine Greaves observing his Time betwixt two woods faced about, and charged the pursuers most valiantly as they themselves confesse, and drove them backe againe : in which charge Denby was slaine immediately, and the rest fled, and so we escaped with safety ; onely Captaine Greaves received one shot in the face, and a cut in the Arme, but not mortall ; in the pursuit of that troope God made a way for all our souldiers, saving some two or three, to escape most with their armes, which they threw away and hid in pits and ditches as they could, whereof the most, I thinke, the cavaleeres found not, and not one Captaine or Officer was hurt or taken prisoner, nor any considerable man, but most poore fellowes, and malignants, because they could meet with no better, and all are released saving two of the best, though of no great quality, some redeemed themselves for 2*d.* 12*d.* and 8*d.* apiece, and some one or two for 20*s.* Prince Rubert being enraged that he should take never a prisoner of so great a company,

and of those not to raise 20*l*. when he himselfe had undergon so great a losse ; and of those that were slaine [of our side were most poore malignants, some three young men of ordinary quality that bare Armes, and John Carter, and that in their flight ; for but one was slaine,] and one lightly shot in the flesh ; in the entrance for pillage they spared none, friend or foe they lighted of, yet for the most part those that did most against them escaped best, the same I may say of the fire, though they intended to burne the Towne utterly, as may be known by their laying lighted match, with powder, and other combustibile matter at the other end, which fired in divers places, and divers was found out and prevented, so that we may truely say, that the flames, sword, pilledgers, but especially the prison, made a difference betwixt those that feared God, and those that fear him not. But this is remarkable in their vilenesse, that all these houses saving two were fired in cold blood, at their departure, wherein they endeavoured to fire all, and in the flames they would not suffer the people to carry out their goods, or to quench it, triumphingly with reproaches rejoiced that the Wind stood right to consume the Towne, at which present the Lord caused the Winds to turn, which was a token of his notice of their insultation.

For pillage I heare but of little I lost, having obscured the things I had of any vaw ; and for fire, God did marvelously prevent, both to me and many others, whereat the malignants are so enraged that they have since pulled down my Mill, and pretend that Prince Rupert so commanded, and threaten to pull downe my house and divers others, which I thinke they dare not, lest they build it up againe, the County having sent them admonition of their insolency.

Prince Rupert with Hastings kept their rendezvow this day, within two miles of Lichfield, as we credibly heare,

what their designe is we know not, I believe they can doe no good at Lichfield ; I hope their cruelty in our sufferings will provoke this unwilling kingdome to jealousy for the Parliament. I pray you when you have read this, shew it to Mr. B. and Mr. E. not onely to acquaint them with the newes, but of my being in health, with all my Company, wherein I have great cause to rejoyce in the Lord, and so I rest,

Your loving friend,

R. P.

*Coventry, April 8,*  
1643.

SIR,

BEING by my promise ingaged unto you, I am now to make relation of a most barbarous massacree of our townesmen of *Bermingham*, and of the enraged cruelty of Prince *Rupert* and his inhumane Cavaliers : Sir, thus it was, about three of the clocke one Munday in the afternoone, he had with neere two thousand horse and foote, foure Drakes and two Sakers, set against the towne playing with his ordnance, and endeavouring to force his way, with foote and horse, were twice beaten off with our musqueteers at the entrance of *Derrington*, at which many of their men fell, the townes-men held them in play above an houre, we had not above one hundred and fourtie musquets and having many entrances into the towne they were many too few, *Coventry* men had withdrawne their forces three daies before, all but Captaine *Castledownes* Dragooneers, a Troope of horse of Master *Perkes* commanded by Captaine *Greaves* being in the Towne, not fit for that service, made escape when the adversaries began to incompasse the Towne, and force the waies over the medowes, and fired the Towne in two places, and so by incompassing them that did defend the out-worke, caused them to draw inward,

to other workes there in Digboth, which worke they defended to the adversaries losse, but being the enemy brake in at the Millone they were forced to leave that worke also, and so put to shift for themselves, with breaking through houses, over garden waies, escaped over hedges and boggy medowes, and hiding their armes, saved most of them, the enemy killed none, as I here in fight unlesse some three or foure, Mr. *Carter*, and Samuell *Elsmore*, being of them, some with their armes defended themselves stoutly till death, they pursued the rest in fields and lanes, cutting and most barbarously mangling naked men to the number of fifteene men, one woman, another being shot, and many hurt, many men sore wounded, and Mr. *Tillam* the surgeon standing in his dore to entertaine them, was most cruelly shot, having his leg and thigh bones broken, they pillaged the Towne generally, their owne friends sped worst, and one tuesday morning set fire in diverse places of the Towne, and have burnt neere a hundred dwellings the Welch end, Dale end, and More street end, Humphrey *Rans*, the Bell, and diverse houses thereabout, many other fires they kindled, but they did not burne, they left kindled matches with gunpowder also in other places, intending nothing lesse then utterly to destroy the Towne, but by Gods providence they whose hurt they chiefly intended by Gods hand is much prevented, the Cavaliers lye about *Clanke* beyond *Wosall*, are joyned with *Hastings* forces, and intend to set on the Close at *Lichfield*, where I feare not but they will have enough ; your Father's house stands, but hath lost much, Mr. *Roberts* Mr. *Porters*, and mine be safe, but are threatned to be pulled downe, and they pretend Prince *Ruperts* warrant, but however its their envy to God's overruling providence hath turned the mischief so much on the heads of those that might with their timely helpe have prevented this mischief ; I am much grieved at the losse of your brother, and



many other friends, three being my honest worke-men, whose lives I would I had redeemed with mine estate. The Cavaliers have lost thirty men at least, of which there be three or foure chiefe men Earles and Lords, I beleeeve you have heard them named the Earle of *Denby*, the Lord John *Stewart*, some say the Lord *Digby*, thirty are said to be buried and many carried away wounded, this did so much enrage them, that they appeared more like Devills then men, lamenting more their losse, then boasting of their gaine, which was much in goods and in money, its thought above two-thousand pound, thirteene hundred being taken from Mr. *Peake*, Mr. *Jennens* lost much, the which men if they had parted with little before, our fortification had been such as they could not have entred, which went on well for the time. So wishing you to have comfort in our God, who is able to turne the rage of men to his praise, and sweeten this bitter cup by some other comfort I conclude and rest,

Yours to command,

R. G.

I could wish I might heare how the City stands affected with our losse, for a little reliefe from them, might much comfort many poore people, which have lost all, and are left well nie naked and harbourlesse: it would much encourage all to stand out in the cause, that are but indifferent, a helpe to ease the better party of, the burthen of the which will be otherwaies too great for us; I would move some friends if you thinke fit, I have already put on the worke of contribution in this City.

FINIS.

*A Letter written from Walshall by a worthy Gentleman  
to his Friend in Oxford, concerning Burmingham.*

Printed in the year 1643. A MS. note adds April 14th.

SIR,

HEARING of the approach of Prince *Rupert* his Highnesse, and coming according to my duty to attend him, In my way I heard of the miserable destruction of *Burmingham* by fire; which I must confesse took the deepest Apprehensions with me of any one accident since the beginning of these unhappy distractions, as presenting to my view a picture of the present estate of *Germany*, and as by a prospective shewing me (not very farre off) the Scene translated from thence hither. This sad thought drew me to a more narrow enquiry of the causes of the burning of the Towne, and whether it was done by authority or no. And I found that the Inhabitants of that Towne were they who first stirred up those of *Coventry* to resist the King, and that about 300 from thence went into *Coventry* to defend it against the King's Forces, that from thence they sent 15000 Swords for the Earle of Essex his Forces, and the ayd of that Party, and not onely refused to supply the King's Forces with swords for their money, but imprisoned diverse who bought swords, upon suspicion that they intended to supply the King's forces with them. That afterwards when His Majesty marched that way with His Army, out of his princely goodnesse and in hope that His Grace and favour would prevayle with them to turne good subjects, he gave expresse order that they should not be plundered, and because some were plundered (though but a few and very little taken from them) there was exemplary Justice done by the hanging of two Officers, and they had a speciall protection granted to

them. Yet so little use did they make of the King's Clemency, that the King's Army was no sooner removed from thence but they stayed all the Carriages which did not move the same day with the King's Army, amongst which was some of the King's Plate and diverse goods of great value, and therein they were so hearty and zealous that at their owne charges they carried them to *Warwicke* Castle before the king was out of that Shire.

And they have still continued upon all occasions violently to oppose the King, and to ayd those who have taken up armes against him. Insomuch that they made fortifications about the Town, and sent out parties to plunder the King's friends.

And when his Highnesse upon Munday last sent one to them to take up his quarter at *Burmingham*, who assured them that if they would quietly receive his Highnesse and his forces they should suffer no injury, But otherwise they must expect to be forced to it, they refused to give him Entrance, and prepared themselves with all their strength to resist him; and when his forces drew neare they set up their Colours, and sallyed out of their workes, and gave fire upon them, and with opprobrious speeches reviled them, calling them *Cursed doggs, develish Cavaliers, Popish Traytors*, and this was done not by a few of them but by almost all of them with great shouts and clamours. This could not but incense the souldiers, and the Prince to make his passage into the Towne was forced to give orders for firing a house or two; but they retiring and flying, upon his entrance into the Towne he immediately gave order for quenching of the fire which was done accordingly, and no more hurt was done on Munday. But yesterday his Highnesse being to march from thence, and fearing what those great provocations might worke with the Souldiers, he gave expresse command that no souldier should attempt to fire the Towne. And after his uepar-

ture thence some souldiers (as yet unknown) having fired the Towne in diverse places, he immediately sent to the inhabitants of the Towne, to let them know it was not done by his command, and therefore wished them to quench it, but the wind being high and the fire encreased, it could not be so soone extinguished as was to be desired !

One thing more I heard of at this taking of *Burmingham*, which made some Impression with me, which was the death of a minister killed presently after the entry of the souldiers into the Towne. But it is alleadged that he told the souldier who killed him, that the King was a Perjured and Papisticall King, and that he had rather dye then live under such a king, and that he did and would fight against him ; and in his pocket after his death were found some papers sufficient to make mee to beleieve the man was either mad, or one of the new Enthusiasts. It burdens my modesty to repeat them, but the truth (which you will desire to know) extorts them from mee, some of them were to this effect, that the 28 of March last he had a comfortable Kisse from Mrs. E. with some moystnesse, and another day a cynamon Kisse from another woman, and another from one of fourteen yeares old, with much more such like stuffe which I blush to write.

And surely whatsoever the Principles of these teachers may be, the conclusions made by their Disciples is very strange. One of the best sort of their prisoners here being discoursed withall concerning his taking up armes against the King, and demanded how he could take up armes in that manner considering his oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, peremptorily answered, he never did nor never would take those oaths.

Sir, this I thought fit to write to you, while the memory of the business is fresh ; and though it may be accom-



panied with these circumstances, yet it much troubles his Highnesse that this Accident should now fall out, he well knowing that they who are the great *Boute fieus* and Incendiaries in the Statē, will be apt to calumniate him for the firing of this Towne, which he never Commanded or Countenanced, and the actors of which he is most desirous to punish, and is most carefull to find out. And this narrative now made you may be confident is true, comming from

Your most humble and  
faithfull Servant.

Walshall, April 5, 1643.

FINIS.

*Prince Rupert's Burning Love to England, discovered in  
Birmingham's Flames; or, a more Exact and true  
Naration of Birmingham's Calamities, under the bar-  
barous and inhumane Cruelties of P. Rupert's forces.*

Wherein is related how that famous and well affected Town of *Birmingham* was

Unworthily opposed,	}	<i>By Prince Rupert's Forces.</i>
Insolently invaded		
Notoriously robbed and plundered,		
And most cruelly fired in cold blood the next day.		

Together with the Number of *Prince Rupert's Forces*, his considerable Persons slaine, or mortally wounded; their many abominable Carriages in and after the taking of the Town. The small Strength which *Birmingham* had to maintaine their defence, the Names of their men slaine; the number of houses burned, and persons thereby destitute of habitation; with divers other considerable passages.



Published at the request of the Committee at *Coventry*, that the Kingdom may timely take notice what is generally to be expected if the Cavaliers insolencies be not speedily crushed.

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*A righteous man regardeth the life of his Beast, but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruell.*—Prov. xii. 10.

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*London*: Printed for *Thomas Vnderhill*, 1643.

[A MS. Note adds, "1st of May."]

To correct the many false Reports already spread abroad, and to prevent all false narrations for future, concerning the late surprisall and spoyling of the Towne of *Birmingham*, in the County of *Warwick*. This ensuing Relation of Passages, hath beene collected from

the severall Informations of divers trusty and Intelligent Inhabitants of *Birmingham*, who were eye witnesses of, and sufferers under many the said calamities of that Towne, so farre as the truth of such turbulent distracted Occurrents can be yet discovered.

The Towne of *Birmingham* perceiving that for their faithfull affection to King and Parliament, they had derived the hatred of Popish and prophane Malignants upon themselves; and that since the Noble Lord *Brookes* death, these parts of the Country began to be much infested with divers Troopes of Robbers and Plunderers, whereby their persons and estates were much indangered, resolved to Arme themselves and estates, and to maintaine two Captaines for the better Disciplining and ordering of their men to that end: But whilst they were beginning to make some slight mounds and Breast-works for defence the week before Easter last, information came that Prince *Rupert* with 1500 or 2000 men with 4 Drakes and 2 Sacres was upon his march at *Stratford upon Avon* and about *Henly* some 10 miles distant from *Birmingham*, where these forces hovered about 4 dayes, pillageing the Country extremely (as their manner is) *Birmingham* hoped they might passe by them, but afterwards perceiving on Saturday night, that it was probable their designe was toward *Staffordshire*, and that they would take *Birmingham* in their way; The Minister of *Birmingham* entreated the Captaines and chiefe of the Towne, by no meanes to thinke of such an impossible defence of themselves against 2000, themselves having scarce six score Musqueteers in all the Towne, but rather to march away with all their Armes, and so secure their Armes and persons, though their goods were hazarded, as a thing farre more safe and rationall, which motion the Captaines and chiefe of the Town readily imbraced, but the middle and inferior sort of people, (especially those that bore Armes) would by no meanes be drawn

to leave the Towne, and so they all resolved to stand upon their own guard, otherwise the chiefe of the Towne and the Captaines must have departed as Cowards, with great Contempt many scornes and curses.

On *Easter Monday* Prince *Rupert's* Forces approached to the Towne about 2 or 3 o'Clock in the Afternoone, at one end, presently assaulted it with great fury, discharging their Musquets and great pieces onely about 100 Musketiers opposing them (the rest hiding themselves) which were also divided into severall ends of the Town, and not many in any one place, a good while the Musketiers kept them off their works, and drove them back till they fired a thatched house, and burnt two or three houses at Towns end and their Horse also broke into the fields and came in at the backsides of the Town through Lake-meadow, which forced the Towns-men to retreat back into the Towne to charge them, when they came up, when they slew some very considerable man who was presently stripped of his rich garments, and wrapped in a grey coat, and a woman of theirs suborned to lament for him as her husband, they called him *Adam a Bell*, but this loss so enraged them that they presently burnt 2 or 3 houses to the ground, where they conceived he was *shot*; then they broke in so forcibly upon the few *men* in the *town* that they were forced to scatter and fly for their *lives*. It is very remarkable that none of them were slaine or hurt whiles they stood upon their Guard (as is credibly averred) till they scattered and were so singled out. The Cavaliers rode up into the Towne like so many Furies or Bedlams, the Earle of *Denbigh* being in the Front, singing as he rode, they shot at every doore or window where they could espy any looking out, they hacked, hewed, or pistoled all they met with, without distinction, blaspheming, cursing, and damning, themselves most hideously. Discovering a Troope of Horse, which was under the command of Captaine *Greaves* at the



further end of the Towne facing them, they pursued after them, who after a little flight wheeled about, and most stoutly charged them through, and the Captaine recived five small wounds (which are now almost well : In which charge the Ea. of *Denbigh* was knockt off his horse, laid for dead, and his pockets rifled (though his wounds not so mortall as to die presently) the rest of his horse were chased till they came neere their own Colours, which was excellent service, for meane while most of the Townes foot escaped away.

After which Captaine *Greaves* retreated, and so advanced to *Lichfield*. Their Horse rode desperately round the Town, leaping hedges and ditches (wherein one is reported to breake his neck) to catch the Townes-men ; no mad-men could ride more furiously. They slew in their frenzy as we are informed, about 14 in all, viz. *John Carter*, junior, *William Knight*, Glasier, *William Billingsley*, junior, *Joseph Rastell*, *William Turton*, Cutler, *Thomas* the Ostler at Swan, pistolled comming officiously to take their Horses, *Richard Hunt* Cobler, *Henry Benton* Labourer, *Samuel Elsmore* Cutler, *William Ward* Cutler, *Richard Adams*, Cobler, *Widdow Collins*, *Lucas* his Wife, and one Mr. *Whitehall* a Minister, who hath bin long Lunatick, held Jewish opinions, and had layn in Bedlam and other prisons (some say) 16, some 22 yeares, and was lately come out ; they comming to him asked him if he would have quarter, he answered to this (or like purpose) he scorned Quarter from any Popish Armies or Souldiers, whereupon they supposing him to be Mr. *Roberts* Minister of *Birmingham*, did most cruelly mangle and hack him to death, and found certain idle and foolish papers in his pocket, which they spared not to divulge (as they thought to the Round-heads infamy) and so went insulting up and down the Towne that they had quartered their Minister, out of whose bloody hands the Lord's gracious providence delivered him a little

before the Town was assaulted, and (blessed be God) hee is neither slain nor hurt. All the considerable men escaped out of their snare, some 40 (they say) were taken prisoners, whereof scarce 20, of their own Town, all inferior men, most of them their own favourers, and since for trifling sums of money they are released all, save 2 or 3 (as unworthy to be kept.)

Having thus possessed themselves of the Towne, they ran into every house cursing and damming, threatening and terryfying the poore women, most terribly, setting naked Swords and Pistolls to their breasts, they fell to plundering all the Towne before them, as well Malignants as others, picking purses, and pockets, searching in holes and corners, Tiles of houses, Wells, Pooles, Vaults, Gardens and every place they could suspect for money and goods, forcing people to deliver all the money they had. It is credibly believed they took from one *Thomas Peake* a Councillor 1500 or 1300 *li.* at least, for he afterwards deeply professed that they had but left him in money 15d. q; and it was commonly known he had about the said sums lying cankering and rusting by him for these many Yeares, and yet to this day he would never voluntarily lend or give the least summe for the Relief of God's Ch: and the Land in the present saddest distresses, who being under *Oneals* hands (as we are credibly informed) when tidings of their Minister's death was brought to him, replied (thinking thereby to curry favour) that it had bin well if he had bin killed 7 yeares agoe. They have had divers great Summes also from others, who have shewed small love to *King and Parliament*; tooke much money to protect people's Houses, and afterwards betrayed them, and set them on fire. It is conceived they had 3000*l.* in money from the Towne. They beastly assaulted many Women's chastity, and impudently made their brags of it afterwards, how many they had ravished; glorying in

their shame, especially the *French* among them, were outrageously lascivious and lecherous. They broke the Windowes, spoyled the goods they could not take away, and carried with them all the chiefe goods in the Towne, some having little left, some nothing but bare walls, some nothing but cloathes on their backs, and some stripped to their very shirts and left naked. That night few or none of them went to Bed, but sate up revelling, robbing, and Tyrannizing over the poore affrighted Women and prisoners, drinking, drunke, healthing upon their knees, yea drinking healths to Prince *Ruperts* Dog.

Nor did their rage here cease, but when on next day they were to march forth of the Towne, they used all possible diligence in every Street to kindle fire in the Towne with Gunpowder, Match, Wispes of Straw, and Besomes burning coales of fire &c. flung into Straw, Hay, Kid piles, Coffers, Thatch, and any other places, where it was likely to catch hold; many of which attempts were successlesse and found after their departure, yea, it is confidently related, that they shot fire out of their Pistolls, wrapping lighted Match with powder or some other ingredients in formes of slugs, or bullets in brown Paper, which themselves confessed was the Lord *Digbies* devise, that English Firebrand; and lest any should save any of their goods they had left, or quench their flames, they stood with their drawne swords and Pistols, about the burning houses, shooting and indeavouring to kill every one that appeared to preserve goods, and quench the fire, domineering at the flames, *Where's your Coventry now? Where's your God Brookes now? You may see how God fights against you,* &c. And when some of the Towne (whose purses had dearely purchased some interest among them) diswaded them for further fireing, one of their owne men confessed that every *Quartermaster* was sworne to fire his owne Quarter, and that they durst not but doe it. By all which it

notoriously appears, that their full intention was, and that by command (let them pretend what excuse they can) to burne downe the whole Towne to the ground, and doubtlesse would have done it, had not the Lord been the more mercifull: the houses burned were about 87. besides multitudes of Barnes, Stables and other back buildings, belonging both to these dwelling Houses and to others that escaped the flames. Persons unfurnished and fallen into extreme distresse by this fire, 340, and upwards. So that many are quite undone by these barbarous cruelties, which are so much the more cruell, in as much as all these (except five or six Houses) were burnt in cool blood, the next day after they had sacked the Towne. And yet for all this the Souldiers told the Inhabitants, that Prince *Rupert* dealt mercifully with them: but when they came back againe with the *Queenes Army*, they would leave neither Man, Woman, nor childe alive. Such are the Cavaliers mercies. This Towne (as is thought) was the first Towne in the Kingdom, that was generally plundered when the King marched from *Shrewsbury*, before *Keynton*, battell and the first that in cold blood was barborously fyred: However Prince *Rupert* hath got himselfe eternall honour, by conquering so mighty an enemy as 100. Musketers, with so small an army as 2000. men. Since their departure Prince *Rupert* hearing that some in *Birmingham*, cursed him for his Cruelties, had designed (as one of their owne Party informed) two Troopes of Horse to fire the rest of the Towne. Whereupon some of the Towne petitioning him not to doe it, he replied he would not if they rebelled not againe, nor returned to their vomit. Sithence they have caused one Mr. *Porters* Blademill in the Towne, to be pulled downe, wherein swordblades were made and employed, onely for the service of the Parliament, and so they were informed (which cost erecting about 100*l.*) threatening if it were not pulled downe. the rest of the Towne



should be burnt. For now they begin to be great Agents in Fire-Workes.

On their part it is probably believed there fell three very considerable Men, *viz.* Earle of *Denbigh* who died not long after of his Wounds, another as is supposed, was Sir *William AYRES*. The third as yet not knowne.

Certainly two Coffins were made in *Birmingham*, while the Earle of *Denbigh* was alive; and many common Soldiers are supposed to be slaine, some suspected to be buried in the Breast-workes ditch they entred, which they laid flat, and charged that none should meddle with it upon paine of death, and when they came into the Towne, they cursed at the Round-heads, and swore *they shot, as if they had been shooting at Sparrowes, scarce ever missed Man or Horse*. They tooke away two Cart load of wounded Men, about 12 in a Cart, when they went away. Now they have made *Birmingham* a woful spectacle to behold, a thorow Faire for Thieves and plunderers; the rich are wofully wasted and spoyled multitudes, almost quite beggered; and undone; it is thought 20000*l.* cannot repaire their *losses*, their own Malignant neighbours rage at the well-affected, like mad men, their minister is driven from home, debarred from all imployment and deprived from all his maintenance; besides his many losses by fire and plundering, and till those parts be cleared small hopes of his safe returne, being so much maligned and threatned by the Cavaliers, and the domineering anti-guard left in *Birmingham*. The People that are left are fed with such rayling Sermons as one *Orton* Curate to *Parson Smith* the ancient Pluralist can afford them, rankly tempered with the malignancy of his owne distempered Spirit. And all well-affected People are forced to be absent from their habitations, to their excessive charge in this their low estate, for fear of surprizalls, large summes being proferred to apprehend them, especially those

of better ranke. Yet they desire to bear all these crosses patiently and profitably take with joy the spoyling of all their goods, knowing in themselves that they suffer in a good cause, and that they have in Heaven a farre better and more enduring substance.

Let all the Kingdome well consider *Birminghams* calamities and conclude what all are like to feele unlesse they maturely bestirre themselves to shake off the Cavaliers more then *Egyptian* yoke.

FINIS.

*Extract from "Vicars's God in the Mount, or England's Parliamentarie Chronicle," which may be found at page 296 of that work:*

"April the 8th came certain intelligence to *London* from *Brumingham* of the cruell slaughter of diverse of the inhabitants of that honest Town, and that about eighty of their dwelling houses were burnt downe by that barbarous and butcherly Prince of *Robbers*, and his accursed Cavaliers. But yet withall, that his filching Forces got little by their so inhumane barbarity: for, God fought for those poore unarmed inhabitants, who were for the most part, Smiths, whose profession or trade was to make nails, sythes and such like iron commodities; and that with such iron-weapons as they had they so knocked the Earl of *Denbigh* that he received his deaths wound in his furious pursuit of some of them, and immediately after dyed of those his wounds: And with him also (as it was credibly informed) the Lord *Digby* that arch-traitor to the Common wealth of *England* was sorely wounded in the same fight. And this

also was noted and credibly informed thence as a remarkable providence of the Lord. That in the plundering and burning of this Town the greatest losse was to the malignant partie of that Town who inhabited among them, most of the honest and godly men there, having by Gods mercy and good providence carryed and conveyed away their best goods into *Coventry* before the Cavaliers came to their Town."

In 1665, London was not only visited with the plague, but many other parts of England, among which Birmingham felt this dreadful mark of the divine judgment. The infection is said to have been caught by a box of clothes, brought by the carrier, and lodged at the White-hart. Depopulation ensued. The church-yard was insufficient for the reception of the dead, who were conveyed to Lady Wood Green, one acre of waste land, thence denominated the Pest Gound.

## MARKET PLACES.

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THE Charter for the market has evidently been renewed by divers kings, both *Saxon* and *Norman*, but when first granted is uncertain, perhaps at an early *Saxon* date ; and the day seems never to have been changed from Thursday. The first charter we find on record was granted by Henry II., to Peter de Birmingham, prior to the year 1166, and confirmed by Richard I., to Willliam de Birmingham, son and successor to *Peter*.

Thursday's market, was no doubt the only market held in Birmingham for many centuries, but necessity has created two others, viz. those held on Mondays and Saturdays, which are equally well attended by venders and customers with the original. Indeed, the Saturday's market is by far the most important to the bulk of the community, the working classes. The space now used as our market, was in 1769, completely choked with buildings and filth ; the shambles, the round house, and the cross nearly filled the area. An act was passed in 1769 to remove these obstructions, and also to remove the Beast Market from High Street, to Dale End, and the Sheep and Pig Market to New Street, where they remained till removed by a subsequent Act of Parliament in 1817, to Smithfield. In 1812, the Street Commissioners obtained an Act of Parliament to consolidate three acts then in force, and give them further powers. Under the provisions of this act, the Pig and Horse Markets were removed from New Street, then



held from Worcester Street to Peck Lane; the Beast Market from Dale End, held from High Street to the Priory; and the Hay Market from Ann Street. It declares also that the Bull Ring shall be the sole market for vegetables, &c. The Market Tolls were purchased by the commissioners from the Lord of the Manor, for £12,500 by virtue of this act. The present amount of the Market Tolls is about £3,000 per annum. The expenses about £670, leaving a nett profit of £2,430 per annum, nearly twenty per cent. upon the above outlay. The commissioners were also empowered to purchase the ancient Manor House and moat, then in the possession of Mr. Frances, as a manufactory, to make a Market Place, for the sale of pigs, sheep, horses, neat, cattle, hay and straw, &c. This latter provision of the act was rather tardily carried into execution, at an expense of £5,672.

The market was first opened May 29th, 1817, being Whitsun fair day, five years and nine days after the passing of the act. The area of the market is one and a half acres. Thus the spot where the ancient barons of Birmingham used to hold their court, and feast their dependents, where the fat of the land had used to be consumed, is now the place where it changes hands only. The gibes and jests that used to set the table in a roar at the midnight revels of these petty kings, while under the influence of their good old sack, are now succeeded by the discordant music of sheep, pigs, and oxen, sufficient to supply the cravings of 150,000 stomachs.

The act of 1812 having been put in force as far as practicable, the commissioners obtained a fifth act, in the year 1828, granting them considerable powers, in fact, constituting them a self-elected and perpetual corporation, over whom the inhabitants have no control whatever. Those powers to be spoken of here are to erect a Market Hall, which has been long wanted, and is now in a very forward

state. It also empowers them to erect a Corn Exchange, upon some convenient site. The commencement of the Market Hall was delayed till 1833, in consequence of large sums having been demanded by parties in possession of premises, on the spot fixed upon for the building. This spot is decidedly the best that could have been chosen.

The ground was cleared by the latter end of 1832, and the first stone laid in February 1833. The length of the building is three hundred and sixty-five feet, by one hundred and eight feet in breadth; fronting the north is a facade of the Grecian Doric order, sustaining an entablature which extends along the flank, and also round the building, executed in Bath stone, upon a rusticated basement. There are twelve spacious entrances, communicating with High Street, Worcester Street, Phillip Street, and Bell Street; the roof is divided into three ranges, supported by two tier of ornamental cast iron columns, twenty-eight feet high; the basement story consists of very extensive store vaults, and there are twenty-three retail shops fronting Bell Street, intended for provision dealers. To the original design of the front have been added by the commissioners, two extensive retail shops, one occupied by a grocer and tea dealer, Mr. Hodgkins, and the other by a wine and spirit dealer; the commissioners fitted up the latter, and obtained licences to it, for the express purpose of disposing of it for this trade, it was sold by auction for the sum of £5,440 for a term of one hundred years, at the annual rent of one pound, November, 1833. From the parts already finished, we may conclude that the building will reflect great credit upon the Architect, Mr. Charles Edge, and the builders, Messrs. Dewsbury and Walthews. The markets are well supplied with every kind of provisions at reasonable prices; the land surrounding the town is fertile in the production of all kinds of vegetables, fruit, &c. Evesham, Worcester, Lichfield, and Tamworth, contri-

bute largely to the supply. The lords were tenacious of their privileges, or one would think, there was no need to renew their charter. Prescription, necessity, and increasing numbers, would establish the right. Perhaps, in a Saxon period, there was room sufficient in our circumscribed market-place, for the people and their weekly supplies ; but now their supplies would fill it, exclusive of the people. Thus, by a steady and persevering hand, she has kept a constant and uniform stroke at the anvil, through a vast succession of ages, rising superior to the frowns of fortune, establishing a variety of productions from iron, ever improving her inventive powers, and perhaps changing a number of her people, equal to the whole inhabitants, every sixteen years.

## MODERN STATE OF BIRMINGHAM.

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It is the practice of the historian, to divide ancient history from modern, at the fall of the Roman empire. For, during a course of about seven hundred years, while the Roman name beamed in meridian splendour, the lustre of her arms and political conduct influenced, more or less, every country in Europe. But at the fall of that mighty empire, which happened in the fifth century, every one of the conquered provinces was left to stand upon its own basis. From this period the history of nations takes a material turn.

The English historian divides his ancient account from the modern, at the extinction of the house of Plantagenet, in 1485, the fall of Richard the Third. For, by the introduction of letters, an amazing degree of light was thrown upon science, and, by a new system of politics, adopted by Henry the Seventh, the British constitution, occasioned by one small act of parliament, that of allowing liberty to sell land, took a very different, and an important course.

But the ancient and modern state of Birmingham, must divide at the restoration of Charles the Second. For though she had before, held a considerable degree of eminence; yet at this period, the curious arts began to take root, and were cultivated by the hand of genius. Building leases, also, began to take effect, extension fol-



lowed, and numbers of people crowded upon each other, as into a paradise.

As a kind tree, perfectly adapted for growth, and planted in a suitable soil, draws nourishment from the circumjacent ground, to a great extent, and robs the neighbouring plants of their support, that nothing can thrive within its influence ; so Birmingham, half whose inhabitants above the age of ten, perhaps, are not natives, draws her annual supply of hands, and is constantly fed by the towns that surround her, where her trades are not practised, preventing every increase to those neighbours who kindly contribute to her wants. This is the case with Bromsgrove, Dudley, Stourbridge, Sutton, Lichfield, Tamworth, Coleshill, and Solihull.

We have taken a view of Birmingham in several periods of existence, during the long course of perhaps three thousand years ; standing sometimes upon presumptive ground. If the prospect has been a little clouded, it only caused us to be more attentive, that we might not be deceived. But, though we have attended her through so immense a space, we have only seen her in infancy ; comparatively small in her size, homely in her person, and coarse in her dress. Her ornaments, wholly of iron, from her own forge. But now, her growth will be amazing ; her expansion rapid, perhaps not to be paralleled in history. We shall see her rise in all the beauty of youth, of grace, of elegance, and attract the notice of the commercial world. She will add to her iron ornaments, the lustre of every metal that the whole earth can produce, with all their illustrious race of compounds, heightened by fancy, and garnished with jewels. She will draw from the fossil, and the vegetable kingdoms ; press the ocean for shell, skin, and coral : she will tax the animal, for horn, bone, and ivory, and she will decorate the whole with the touches of her pencil.

I have met with some remarks, published in 1743, wherein the author observes, "That Birmingham, at the restoration, probably consisted only of three streets." But it is more probable it consisted of fifteen, though not all finished, and, about nine hundred houses. I am sensible when an author strings a parcel of streets together, he furnishes but a dry entertainment for his reader, especially to a stranger. But, as necessity demands intelligence from the historian, I must beg leave to mention the streets and their supposed number of houses.

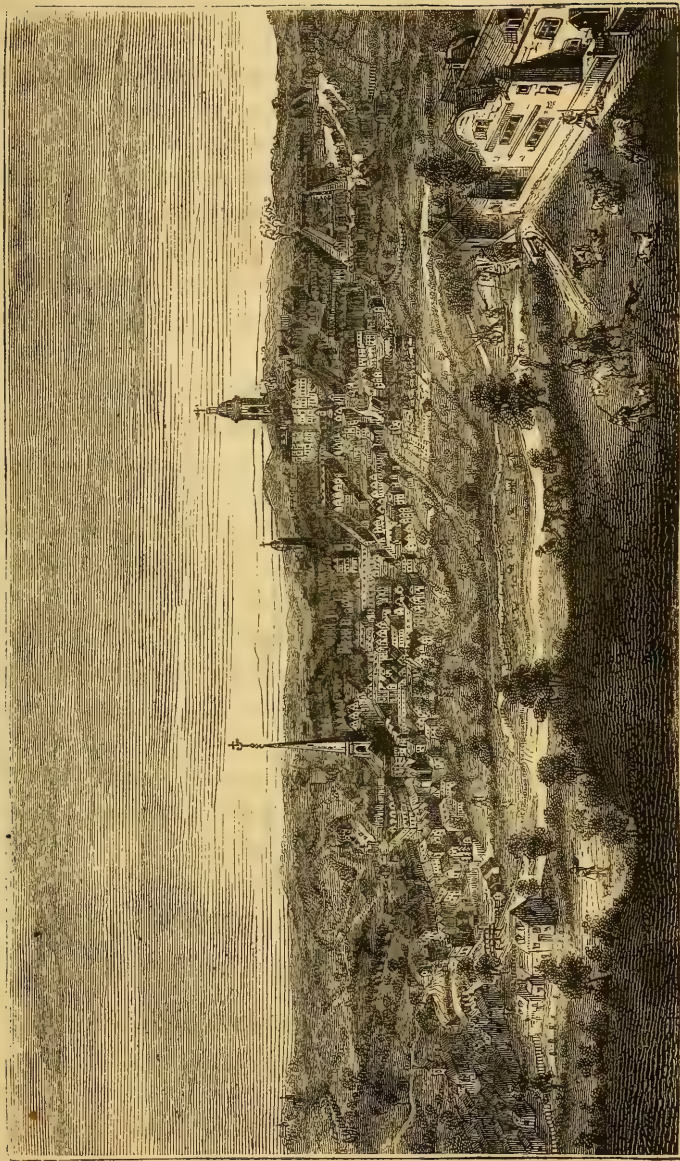
Digbeth, nearly the same as now, except the twenty-three houses between the two Mill Lanes, which are of a modern date, about	-	-	-	-	110
Moat Lane (Court Lane)	-	-	-	-	12
Corn Market and Shambles	-	-	-	-	50
Spiceal Street	-	-	-	-	50
Dudley Street	-	-	-	-	50
Bell Street	-	-	-	-	30
Philip Street	-	-	-	-	20
St. Martin's Lane	-	-	-	-	15
Edgbaston Street	-	-	-	-	70
Lee's Lane	-	-	-	-	10
Park Street, extending from Digbeth nearly to the East end of Freeman Street	-	-	-	-	80
Moor Street, to the bottom of Castle Street	-	-	-	-	70
Bull Street, not so high as the Minories	-	-	-	-	50
High Street	-	-	-	-	100
Deritend and Bordesley	-	-	-	-	120
Odd houses scattered round the verge of the town	-	-	-	-	70

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 907

The number of inhabitants, 5,472.

The same author farther observes, "That from the



A PROSPECT OF BIRMINGHAM, IN THE YEAR 1720.





restoration to the year 1700, the streets of Birmingham were increased to thirty-one." But I can make their number only twenty-eight, and many of these far from complete. Also, that the whole number of houses were two thousand five hundred and four, and the inhabitants fifteen thousand and thirty-two. The additional streets therefore seem to have been Castle Street, Carr's Lane, Dale End, Stafford Street, Bull Lane, Pinfold Street, Colmore Street, the Froggery, Old Meeting Street, Worcester Street, Peck Lane, New Street, (a small part) Lower Mill Lane.

Dr. Thomas, the continuator of Dugdale, tells us, "The old parish contained about nine hundred houses, the new between seven and eight, Deritend ninety, and Bordesley thirty," but omits the time; probably about the erection of St. Philip's.

From the year 1700 to 1731, there is said to have been a farther addition of twenty-five streets, I know of only twenty-three: and also of 1215 houses, and eight thousand two hundred and fifty inhabitants. Their names we offer as under:—Freeman Street, New Meeting Street, Moor Street (the North part) Wood Street, the Butts, Lichfield Street, Thomas's Street, John's Street, London Prentice Street, Lower Priory, the Square, Upper Priory, Minories, Steelhouse Lane, Cherry Street, Cannon Street, Needless Alley, Temple Street, King's Street, Queen Street, Old Hinkleys, Smallbroke Street, and the East part of Hill Street.

I first saw Birmingham July 14, 1741, and will perambulate its boundaries with my traveller, beginning at the top of Snow Hill, keeping the town at our left, and the fields that then were, on our right.

Through Bull Lane we proceed to Temple Street; down Peck Lane, to the top of Pinfold Street; Dudley Street, the Old Hinkleys to the top of Smallbroke Street, back

through Edgbaston Street, Digbeth, to the upper end of Deritend. We shall return through Park Street, Masshouse Lane, the North of Dale End, Stafford Street, Steelhouse Lane, to the top of Snow Hill, from whence we set out.

If we compare this account with that of 1731, we shall not find any great addition of streets ; but those that were formed before, were much better filled up. The new streets erected during these ten years were Temple Row, except about six houses. The North of Park Street, and of Dale End ; also Slaney Street, and a small part of the East side of Snow Hill.

We have now girt Birmingham, as the priests did Jericho, seven times, but with this difference, they continued the same rout, we extended ours. In their march the buildings fell, in ours they rise.

From 1741, to the year 1781, Birmingham seems to have acquired the amazing augmentation of seventy-one streets, four thousand one hundred and seventy-two houses, and twenty-five thousand and thirty-two inhabitants. Thus her internal property is covered with new erected buildings, tier within tier. Thus she opens annually a new aspect to the traveller ; and thus she penetrates along the roads that surround her, as if to unite with the neighbouring towns, for their improvement in commerce, in arts, and in civilization.

I have often led my curious inquirer round Birmingham, but, like the thread round the swelling-clue, never twice in the same track. We shall again examine her boundaries. Our former journey commenced at the top of Snow Hill, we now set off from the bottom.

The buildings in 1781, extended about forty yards beyond the Salutation, near the Wolverhampton Road. We turn up Lionel Street, leaving St. Paul's, and about three new erected houses, on the right ; pass close to New Hall,

leaving it on the left, to the top of Great Charles Street, along Easy Hill; we then leave the Wharf to the right, down Suffolk Street, in which are seventy houses, having two infant streets also to the right, in which are about twelve houses each: up to Holloway Head, thence to Windmill Hill, Bow Street, Brick Kiln Lane, down to Lady Well, along Pudding Brook, to the Moat, Lloyd's Slitting Mill, Digbeth, over Deritend Bridge, thence to the right for Cheapside; cross the top of Bradford Street, return by the bridge to Floodgate Street, Park Street, Bartholomew's Chapel, Grosvenor Street, Nova Scotia Street, Woodcock Lane, Aston Street, Lancaster Street, Staniforth Street, Price's Street, Bath Street, to the bottom of Snow Hill.

The circle I have described is about five miles. There are also beyond this crooked line, five clumps of houses belonging to Birmingham, which may be deemed hamlets.

At the Sand Pits upon the Dudley Road, about three furlongs from the buildings, are fourteen houses.

Four furlongs from the Navigation Office, upon the road to Hales Owen, are twenty-nine.

One furlong from Exeter Row, towards the hand, are thirty-four.

Upon Camp Hill, one hundred and thirty yards from the junction of the Warwick and Coventry roads, which is the extremity of the present buildings, are thirty-one.

And two furlongs from the town, in Walmer Lane, now Lancaster Street, are seventeen more.

Since my last journey round Birmingham, the reader and the writer have had a respite for ten years; we shall therefore in the present year, 1791, make exactly the same tour, and, with a critical exactness, observe what streets and houses have arisen on our right, out of solitary fields. The cattle have been turned out of their pasture, to make

room for man; and the arts are planted where the daisy grew. These additions are so amazing, that even an author of veracity will barely meet belief. A *city* has been grafted upon a town! instead of Birmingham drawing her neighbourhood only, she seems to draw the world.

I shall divide my examination into eight parts, according to the eight roads which proceed from her. I will omit the five hamlets, for before for I can mend my pen for another edition of this work, they will be united to the place.

*Between the Roads to Wolverhampton and Dudley, are,*

HOUSES.

On the West side of Constitution Hill, extending to							
the first mile stone	-	-	-	-	-	-	46
Falkner Street	-	-	-	-	-	-	15
Kenyon Street	-	-	-	-	-	-	70
Northwood Street	-	-	-	-	-	-	19
Cock Street	-	-	-	-	-	-	54
Henrietta Street	-	-	-	-	-	-	60
Mary Ann Street	-	-	-	-	-	-	52
North end of Livery Street	-	-	-	-	-	-	206
Water Street	-	-	-	-	-	-	81
North of Church Street and Ludgate Hill	-	-	-	-	-	-	47
St. Paul's Square	-	-	-	-	-	-	62
Caroline Street	-	-	-	-	-	-	11
Mount Street	-	-	-	-	-	-	61
Brook Street	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
James Street	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
North side of Lionel Street	-	-	-	-	-	-	46
North end of Newhall Street	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
Fleet Street	-	-	-	-	-	-	104
North side of Summer Row, between the two Canals	-	-	-	-	-	-	16



There were only three houses, March 14, 1779, in this division. By that day twelvemonth they had increased to fifty-five, and March 14, 1781, they were one hundred and forty-four. The same day in the present year (1791) there is an addition of eight hundred and thirty-three.

*From the Dudley to the Bewdley Road.*

	HOUSES
South side of Summer Row - - - - -	18
Crescent - - - - -	5
King Edward's Place - - - - -	29
North side of the Bewdley Road, extending to the Canal - - - - -	5
	<hr/>
	57

*Between the Bewdley and the Bromsgrove Roads.*

South side of the Road - - - - -	7
Bridge Street - - - - -	12
Wharf Street - - - - -	122
Foredraft Street - - - - -	74
Norfolk Street - - - - -	41
South end of Navigation Street - - - - -	49
Ditto of Cross Street - - - - -	15
Gough Street - - - - -	25
Suffolk Street - - - - -	297
Little Hill Street - - - - -	12
South end of Bristol Street, beyond Inge Street - - - - -	41
	<hr/>
	695
Deduct for seventy houses in Suffolk Street, and twenty-four in two infant streets - - - - -	94
	<hr/>
	601

*From the Bromsgrove to the Coventry Road.*

	HOUSES
North end of Bristol Street, East of Inge Street	- 17
Thorpe Street	- - - - - 84
Dean Street	- - - - - 12
Inge Street	- - - - - 55
Hurst Street	- - - - - 14
Bromsgrove Street	- - - - - 39
Balsall Street	- - - - - 39
Rea Street	- - - - - 44
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	304

*From the Coventry to the Coleshill Road.*

Milk Street	- - - - - 71
Coventry Street	- - - - - 41
Oxford Street	- - - - - 30
Bordesley Street	- - - - - 88
Mountjoy Street	- - - - - 41
Canal Street	- - - - - 13
Fazeley Street	- - - - - 21
Bartholomew Street	- - - - - 125
South side of Vauxhall Row	- - - - - 20
Watery Lane	- - - - - 24
Great Brook Street	- - - - - 27
Lawley Street	- - - - - 47
Windsor Street	- - - - - 55
Henry Street	- - - - - 8
South side of Mile End (Ashsted)	- - - - - 94
	<hr/>
	705

*Between the Road to Coleshill and that to Lichfield.*

	HOUSES
West side of Mile End - - - - -	12
Woodcock Lane - - - - -	87
Leicester Street - - - - -	8
Aston Road, East - - - - -	16
Love Lane - - - - -	23
Duke Street - - - - -	47
Prospect Row - - - - -	32
	<hr/>
	225
Deduct for the seventy houses in Duke Street, &c.	70
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	155

*From the Lichfield to the Stafford Road.*

On the West of Lichfield Road - - - - -	32
North end of Duke Street - - - - -	8
York Street, North end - - - - -	9
Addition to Stainforth Street - - - - -	65
Nell Street - - - - -	11
Lancaster Street - - - - -	63
	<hr/>
	188

*From the Stafford to the Wolverhampton Road.*

North side of Price's Street - - - - -	4
Summer Lane - - - - -	58
Hospital Street - - - - -	70
Hampton Street - - - - -	77
Bond Street - - - - -	9
St. Luke's Row, to the Mile Stone - - - - -	24
	<hr/>
	242

This great circle of streets, which has surrounded Birmingham during the last ten years, will be found to be seventy, and the houses three thousand one hundred and forty-five. There must also have been erected in the internal parts of the town six hundred more, so that an augmentation has taken place of three thousand seven hundred and forty-five, and twenty thousand four hundred and seventy inhabitants.

The hamlets of Deritend and Bordesley, which were chiefly one street in 1767, contain,

	HOUSES			
On the East end of Digbeth	-	-	-	40
Mill Lane	-	-	-	44
The Street called Deritend	-	-	-	287
Quality Row (now Bridge Row)	-	-	-	10
Birchall Street	-	-	-	77
Lombard Street	-	-	-	60
Alcester Street	-	-	-	94
Brandy Row	-	-	-	19
Warwick Street	-	-	-	28
Bradford Street	-	-	-	112
Green Street	-	-	-	25
Cheapside	-	-	-	108
Moseley Street	-	-	-	50
				954

The whole of Deritend and Bordesley, in 1781, consisted of five streets, four hundred houses, and two thousand one hundred and twenty-five inhabitants. The streets are now thirteen, the houses nine hundred and fifty-four, and the inhabitants five thousand and thirteen. Birmingham has therefore added to her dimensions, during the last ten years, seventy-eight streets, four thousand two hundred and ninety-nine houses, and twenty-three thousand three hundred and fifty-eight people.



I shall comprise, in one view, the state of Birmingham in fourteen different periods; and though some are imaginary, perhaps they are not far from real.

		STREETS.	HOUSES.	SOULS.
In the time of the ancient Britons			80	400
A. D.	750,	8	600	3000
	1066,	9	700	3500
	1650,	15	900	5472
	1700,	28	2504	15032
	1731,	51	3717	23286
	1741,	54	4114	24660
	1781,	125	8382	50295
	1791,	203	12681	73653
	1801,	250	15650	73670
	1811,	260	16096	85755
	1821,	325	21345	106722
	1831,	400	29397	146986
	1834,	436	31008	155038

It is easy to see, without the spirit of prophecy, that Birmingham has not yet arrived at her zenith, neither is she likely to reach it for ages to come. Her increase will depend upon her manufactures; her manufactures will depend upon the national commerce; national commerce upon a superiority at sea; and this superiority may be extended to a long futurity.

The interior parts of the town, are like those of other places, parcelled out into small freeholds, perhaps, originally, purchased of the lords of the manor; but, since its amazing increase, which began about the restoration, large tracts of land have been huxtered out upon building leases. Some of the first that were granted, seem to have been about Worcester and Colemore Streets, at the trifling annual price of one farthing per yard, or under. The

market ran so much against the lessor, that the lessee had liberty to build in what manner he pleased; and, at the expiration of the term, could remove the buildings unless the other chose to purchase them. But the market, at this day, is so altered, that the lessee gives sixpence per yard; is tied to the mode of building, and obliged to leave the premises in repair.

The itch for building is predominant: we dip our fingers into mortar almost as soon as into business. It is not wonderful that a person should be hurt by the *falling* of a house; but, with us, a man sometimes breaks his back by *raising* one. This private injury, however, is attended with a public benefit of the first magnitude; for every "*House to be Let*," holds forth a kind of invitation to the stranger to settle in it, who, being of the laborious class, promotes the manufactures.

If we cannot produce many houses of the highest orders in architecture, we make out the defect in numbers. Perhaps *more* are erected here, in a given time, than in any place in the whole island, London excepted. It is remarkable, that in a town like Birmingham, where so many houses are built, the art of building is so little understood. The stile of architecture in the inferior sort, is rather shewy than lasting. The proprietor generally contracts for a house of certain dimensions, at a stipulated price: this induces the artist to use some ingredients of the cheaper kind, and sometimes to try whether he can cement the materials with sand, instead of lime. But a house is not the only thing spoiled by the builder; he frequently spoils himself: out of many successions of house-makers, I cannot recollect one who made a fortune. Many of these edifices have been brought forth, answered the purposes for which they were created, and been buried in the dust, during my short acquaintance with Birmingham. One would think, if a man can survive a house, he has no great

reason to complain of the shortness of life. From the external genteel appearance of a house, the stranger would be tempted to think the inhabitant possessed at least of a thousand pounds ; but, if he looks within, he sees only the ensigns of beggary. We have a people who enjoy four or five hundred pounds a year in houses, none of which, perhaps, exceed six pounds per annum. It may excite a smile, to say, I have known two houses erected, one occupied by a man, his wife, and three children ; the other pair had four ; and twelve guineas covered every expense ! Pardon, my dear reader, the omission of a pompous encomium on their beauty, or duration.

I am inclined to think three-fourths of the houses in Birmingham stand upon new foundations, and all the places of worship, except Deritend Chapel.

About the year 1730, Thomas Sherlock, late Bishop of London, purchased the private estate of the ladies of the manor, chiefly land, about four hundred per annum. In 1758, the steward told me it had increased to twice the original value. The pious old Bishop was frequently solicited to grant building leases, but answered, " His land was valuable, and if built upon, his successor, at the expiration of the term, would have the rubbish to carry off : " he therefore not only refused, but prohibited his successor from granting such leases. But Sir Thomas Gooch, who succeeded him, seeing the great improvement of the neighbouring estates, and wisely judging fifty pounds per acre preferable to five, procured an act in about 1766, to set aside the prohibiting clause in the Bishop's will. Since which, a considerable town may be said to have been erected upon his property, now about £2400 per annum.

An acquaintance assured me, that in 1756 he could have purchased the house he then occupied for £400 but refused. In 1770, the same house was sold for £600, and

in 1772, I purchased it for eight hundred and thirty-five guineas, without any alteration, but what time had made for the worse : and for this enormous price I had only an old house, which I was obliged to take down. Such is the rapid improvement in value, of landed property, in a commercial country. Suffer me to add, though foreign to my subject, that these premises were the property of an ancient family of the name of Smith, now in decay ; were many centuries ago one of the first inns in Birmingham, and well known by the name of the Garland House, perhaps from the sign ; but within memory, Potter's Coffee House. Under one part was a room about forty-five feet long, and fifteen wide, used for the town prison. In sinking a cellar we found a large quantity of tobacco-pipes of a singular construction, with some very antique earthenware, but no coin ; also loads of broken bottles, which refutes the complaint of our pulpits against modern degeneracy, and indicates the vociferous arts of getting drunk and breaking glass, were well understood by our ancestors. In penetrating a bed of sand, upon which had stood a workshop, about two feet below the surface we came to a tumulus six feet long, three feet wide, and five feet deep, built very neat, with tiles laid flat, but no cement. The contents were mouldered wood, and pieces of human bone.

I know of no house in Birmingham, the inns excepted, whose annual rent exceeds ninety pounds. The united rents appear to be about one hundred thousand, which if we take at twenty years purchase, will compose a freehold of £2,000,000 value.

The new erections I have described, with their appendages, cover about three hundred acres. If we allow the contents of the manor to be two thousand nine hundred, and deduct nine hundred for the town, five hundred more for roads, water, and waste land, and rate



the remaining one thousand five hundred at the average rent of £3 per acre, we shall raise an additional freehold of £4500 per annum.

This landed property, at thirty years purchase, will produce £135,000 and, united with the value of the buildings, the fee simple of this happy region of genius, will amount to £2,135,000 (1791).

Between the years 1791 and 1808 Birmingham suffered from a variety of conflicting causes, and seems to have made little or no progress. The riots, which took place in July, 1791, were soon after followed by a very expensive war, which added many millions to our national debt. These, with a stagnation of trade, and the very high prices of provisions, in 1800, occasioned by bad harvests, when flour sold at six shillings per stone, of fourteen pounds, and other things in proportion, caused a decrease in the above years instead of an increase. Many thousands of able-bodied and industrious mechanics entered the army and their masters the gazette, and one thousand eight hundred and fifty houses were left without tenants in 1808: many of which were completely demolished, and tiles, timber, glass, lead, and even bricks, to the very foundation, were carried off. Affairs took a turn soon after this time, and the inhabitants increased more than the buildings; if one house was to let ten persons were ready to take it, and notwithstanding that the war continued till 1814 and 1815, and carried off many thousands of the flower of our youth, Birmingham continued to increase.

From 1791 to 1811 the increase was only thirteen thousand one hundred and two, and the greater part of the addition was made in the last three years of this time. In the twenty years subsequent to 1811 she increased sixty-one thousand two hundred and thirty-one. From 1791 to 1801 a difference of seventeen only is shewn; and the town decreased from that time till about

1808. In the ten years subsequent to 1811, the increase was twenty thousand nine hundred and seventy-six. In this interval great and severe distress was again felt from bad harvests. That of 1816 will long be remembered, as one of great privation and suffering to the humble and industrious classes of society. Potatoes sold at one shilling and twopence per peck, or four shillings and eight pence per bushel; and bread at one shilling and five pence halfpenny the quartern loaf, in 1817.

Many thousands were thrown out of employment by the peace of 1814, who had previously been engaged in the manufacture of the various military implements, for which so great a demand had been created by the long and ruinous war with France; together with the disbanded soldiers, so over handed those trades in which employment remained, that an immediate decrease in the price of labour, and an increase in the Poor Rates were the consequences. In 1819 many means were resorted to by the wealthy and benevolent, to alleviate the miseries of the poor, £5,500 were subscribed, and soup was distributed three times each week. Great quantities of rice, flour, and bacon, were sold somewhat under cost price, and the difference paid by subscription. In this year the country was in a complete ferment. Want of employment and the high price of provisions had driven the poor to desperation, and the Poor Rates, taxes, and loss of trade, had reduced the middle classes almost to a state of insolvency.

Parliamentary Reform, which had some time been agitated, assumed at this period, a formidable appearance. Petitions, containing strong language, were presented to both houses of parliament, signed by more than a million and a half of persons. The government became alarmed, and sent spies into all parts of the country, not to detect plots, but to form them, and then sacrifice their victims.

There were a few discontented and repining spirits in Birmingham, whose blood was sought by these nefarious means. The suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, in 1817, brought to a close the Hampden Club, established in Birmingham, in 1815. The members, of which, were the principal agitators of the day. Lord Sidmouth, the Secretary for the Home Department, issued warrants to apprehend persons suspected of being disaffected. Many arrests took place in various parts of the country. Men were dragged from their homes and families, and kept in various prisons, from six to eighteen months, and were then discharged without trial.

The year 1818 brought with it a continuation of the distress felt in 1817. The Poor Rates amounted to £61,928, and, although there were at that time, about eighteen thousand houses in Birmingham, the whole of this burthen was to be borne by the inhabitants of four thousand houses only ; in consequence of the other portion being too poor to pay. This would make an average assessment of two-thirds the rental. At this time, 1834, there are about thirty-one thousand houses in Birmingham; and the amount of Poors' Rates collected for the year ending Lady-Day, 1834, was £44,312 4s. 3½d. or about £17,616 less than was collected in 1818, when there were thirteen thousand houses less than at present.

An Act of Indemnity was passed at the close of the Session this year, (1818) to indemnify those persons concerned in the various acts of despotism, committed under the direction of Sidmouth and others. In 1819 the reformers began again to take the field, and a great meeting was held on *New Hall Hill*, July 12, 1819, for the purpose of obtaining the representation of the people in parliament. Sixty thousands were said to have assembled upon this occasion. One of the resolutions appointed Sir Charles

Wolsley, Legislative Attorney, and representative of the inhabitants of Birmingham, and he was instructed to claim, on their behalf, admission to the House of Commons, as a member. A cabinet council was held immediately, and in a few days, a proclamation was issued, by the cabinet, denouncing as illegal the proceedings at this meeting. The principal persons who spoke at this assembly were indicted for a conspiracy.

Messrs. George Edmonds, William Greatheed Lewis, Charles Maddox, Thomas Jonathan Wooler, and Major Cartwright, after a harassing prosecution, which lasted two years, during which time, they were obliged to attend at Warwick, through three different assizes, and at the Court of King's Bench, in three different terms, were sentenced as follows: G. Edmonds, nine months; T. J. Wooler, fifteen months; C. Maddox, eighteen months imprisonment in Warwick Goal; and Major Cartwright, to a pay a fine of £100 to the king, he having been put to more than £1000 in travelling, law, and other expenses; W. G. Lewis was sentenced to two years imprisonment, in Oakham Goal, for a pretended libel, published in a Coventry newspaper.

In this year the celebrated Six Acts were passed, one of which was directed against the press, and every means were taken to ensure the abject submission of the people. The tax of fourpence, which was laid upon newspapers, in 1797, was now made applicable to all pamphlets and printed papers, published at a less price than sixpence. The Georgian statesman makes it capital to teach the black slave to read. The British only visit the white with a fine of fourpence for each offence.

Birmingham escaped with the imprisonment only of a few of her sons, notwithstanding the spy, Oliver, made many efforts to hatch a *plot*, in which many lives would have been sacrificed, had he succeeded.



Manchester, about this time, shared a worse fate. Many persons were slaughtered, and others wounded, at a public meeting, and some imprisoned for the same offence. Gradually things changed their aspect; an improved trade, with good and plentiful harvests, brought money to the pockets of the mechanic, and provisions to moderate prices. In 1823, 1824, and 1825, we find Birmingham as well as every part of the empire, in full and constant employment. Combinations were formed amongst the workmen to raise the price of labour, in consequence of the increased demand. An advance was made in the prices of coals, iron, brass, tools, and every other article used in the manufacture of Birmingham hardwares. Many turn-outs took place among the workmen, and in some cases an advance was obtained in their wages.

But this shining picture for the mechanic, and hey-day for the publican, which the improvidence of the former always creates for the latter; at times, when plenty of money is to be obtained by labour, keeping up the good old custom of getting money like horses and spending it like asses, was destined to be of short duration. In December, 1825, the panic came and swept away all the fond cherished hopes of continued prosperity. The improvident or unfortunate mechanics were under the necessity of applying to the parish, and their masters to the Insolvent Debtors' Court. One bank failed on this occasion—which has now paid seventeen shillings and sixpence in the pound. The loss of this bank, which had afforded great accommodation to the tradesmen, was severely felt. Trade slowly improved towards the latter part of 1826 and the beginning of 1827. But the mechanic never recovered his prices. In many instances much less was paid than before the advance in 1824 and 1825, and in some cases half, and even one-third was paid for the same labour.

In 1810, one guinea per gross was paid for the operations performed by one man in the stamped brass foundry trade, and in 1826 the same article was *sold*, including the cost of materials and the labour of the other operations, for the sum of fifteen shillings per gross.

In 1830, the Political Union was established. The history of which will form a separate article. During the years 1831 and 1832 much excitement prevailed, occasioned by the Reform Bill, which was finally passed, June 7, 1832.

Church Rates had long been felt as a grievance in Birmingham, in consequence of so large a proportion of the inhabitants belonging to dissenting congregations. The thirst for reform, about this time, caused this unjust impost to meet with particular attention. A few individuals had been for a series of years labouring to reduce this tax. The rate which had previously been tenpence to one shilling and sixpence in the pound, was reduced in 1830 to fourpence; and in 1831 a second rate was granted of the like sum. But at a meeting, held August 7, 1832, convened for the purpose of granting a rate, and receiving the accounts of the late churchwardens, who had expended about £400 more than the estimates, some resolutions were passed condemnatory of the system of taxing men for a religion they do not approve; and a petition founded thereon to the legislature, praying them to remove the obnoxious impost, was carried by acclamation. The church party were overwhelmed by the spirit that now fully developed itself, and offered little resistance. The meetings usually held upon Church Rates were very numerous attended, and frequently of the most noisy and turbulent description, generally occasioned by the rector as chairman, refusing to put questions to the vote, unless according to the views and wishes of the church party, and not conforming to established usage in con-

ducting the business of the meeting. The meeting adjourned from time to time, till the rector finding the opposition had not abated, thought proper to end the contest by requesting that the adjourned meeting might not be called. No Church Rate has therefore been granted since 1831, and in all probability another will never be granted by the consent of the parishioners.

In 1833 trade was very good, as was manifest by the establishment of Trades Unions, throughout the kingdoms. Birmingham was not last in the formation of these associations. The first stone of a building to be called the Operative Builders' Guild Hall, was laid in great pomp. Some progress was made in the work, but it now stands in ruins, a monument of their folly, disunion, and pusillanimity. The seeds of discord were sown among the unions, by various means, which have nearly brought them to a close.

Some few strikes took place, which generally ended by both master and men being injured. The men by the privations they suffered, and the master by the loss of orders, from delay, or being unable to execute them to price. Trade is, this year, 1834, very dull. The American trade, which forms some considerable portion of our commerce, is at a stand, in consequence of an alteration of the currency of that country. From 1827 to the present time, no very great fluctuations have taken place in trade or the price of provisions. Bread now sells at fivepence halfpenny the quartern loaf, of four pounds; beef sixpence per pound, mutton sevenpence, and other things in proportion. During the war, such quantities of paper money was issued, that the nominal value of every species of property was increased to nearly double what they were in 1791. It will, therefore, be clear to the reader, that the houses spoken of, by Mr. Hutton,

which let for £6 per annum, were, after the introduction of paper money let for about double that sum.

There are a few old and miserable tenements let now for two shillings per week, or less ; but comfortable dwellings, fit for the humblest mechanic, are not to be obtained for less than two shillings and sixpence to four shillings per week, or about £8 to £12 per annum. There are only about eight thousand houses, rented at £10 and upwards, in the town, out of thirty-one thousand, leaving a great majority, between £7 and £10. An unrestricted franchise of £6 would give nearly twenty-five thousand voters. As the franchise now stands, above three thousand will never be brought to the poll. Land is now let from sixpence to one shilling per yard, per annum, leasehold. The rents too of business situations are much increased ; many houses let for sums varying from £100 to £150 per annum, and some few for £200 to £300 per annum. The united rents now amount to about five hundred thousand ; this includes the parish of Birmingham, and so much of the other parishes which now form part of the town, and must ever be considered inseparable from it. This will give a freehold of £10,000,000 at twenty years purchase.

We will once more proceed to mark the boundaries of Birmingham, and it can then be compared with the circle of 1741. We must go to Hockley Brook, nearly, before we have a fair start. We will proceed down the lane to the left, opposite the end of New John Street, west to Wharestone Lane, leaving a few streets newly formed, and the neat little Chapel, of All Saints, consecrated September 28, 1833, to the right hand ; up Wharstone Lane, to the turnpike along Summer Hill, down Cottage Lane, to the Canal Bridge, at the Crescent ; along the Canal to Sheepcote Street, Mill Street, Grosvenor Street, Ladywood Lane, Islington Row, leaving Hagley Row, Calthorpe



Street, Frederick Street, and George Street on the right, thence down Bank Street, Lee Bridge Road, Lee Bank Terrace, Sun Street, cross the Bristol Road, into Benacre Street, along the Pershore Road, to Moseley Street, Lombard Street, Darwin Street, Moseley Road, Ravenhurst Street to Camp Hill, down Sandy Lane, Water Lane, Lawley Street, leaving New Dartmouth Street, Garrison Lane, Saltley Street, and Witton Street to the right; proceed to Vauxhall Lane, Bloomsbury Place, and down Great Lister Street, leaving about four hundred houses on the right, three hundred and fifty of which were erected since the spring of 1833. A great number are not finished, and only a few inhabited. We now proceed along Dartmouth Street, and cross Aston Road, to New John Street, and along New John Street west, leaving Harding and Ormond Streets to the right, in *New Town* Row, and thence to the Hockley Road, the point from which we set out. This irregular circle is about nine miles in extent. From Bloomsbury Place to the Fiveways turnpike, and Camp Hill, to Hockley Brook, are the greatest distances.

## STREETS AND THEIR NAMES.

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WE accuse our short-sighted ancestors, and with reason, for leaving us almost without a church-yard and a market-place; for forming some of our streets nearly without width, and without light. One would think they intended a street without a passage, when they erected Moor Street; and that their successors should light their candles at noon. This was widened in the year 1807.

Something, however, may be pleaded in excuse, for we should ever plead the cause of the absent, by observing, the concourse of people was small, therefore a little room would suffice; and the buildings were low, so that light would be less obstructed: besides, as the increase of the town was slow, the modern augmentation could not then be discovered through the dark medium of time; but the prospect into futurity is at this day rather brighter, for we plainly see, and perhaps with more reason, succeeding generations will blame us for neglect. We possess the power to reform, without the will; why else do we suffer enormities to grow, which will have taken deep root in another age? If utility and beauty can *be joined together* in the street, why are they ever *put asunder*? It is easy for Birmingham to be as rapid in her improvement, as in her growth.

We have more reason to accuse *ourselves* of neglect, than our ancestors; for we cherish all their blunders in

**P.**

Paradise street—New-st to Easy-row, 7  
 Paradise row, Darwin-st  
 Parade the, Newhall hill  
 Park street—Digbeth to Masshouse-lane, 6, 10  
 Park lane—Park-st to Allison-st 6  
 Park place, Aston-road  
 Park vale, ditto  
 Palmer street—Gt. Barr-st 9  
 Peck lane—New-st to Dudley-st 6  
 Pershore street—Smallbrook-st to Bromsgrove-st 6  
 Pershore road, Balsall-st 2  
 Phillip street—High-st to Worcester-st 6  
 Pinfold street—Peck-lane to New-st 6, 7  
 Pope street—Albion-st to Wharstone-lane, 8, 12  
 Potter street—Lancaster-st to Moland-st 10  
 Powell street—Camden-st to Summer-hill, 8  
 Price street—Lancaster-st to Loveday-st 10  
 Princep street—Lancaster-st to Shadwell-st 11  
 Princes street—Coleshill-st A. B. House, 10  
 Princes row—Hick's-square to Howe-st 10  
 Pritchett street—New Town-row to Aston-road, 15  
 Priory Upper—Steelhouse lane to the square, 10  
 Priory Lower—Dale-end to the square, 10  
 Prospect row—Coleshill-st to Woodcock-st 10  
 Primrose hill, Great Lister-st  
 Prospect hill, Handsworth  
 Puddingbrook, near Bromsgrove-st 2  
 Pumphry's street, New Town-row

**V.**

Vale street—Navigation-st to New Inkleys, 6  
 Vauxhall street—Stafford-st to New Thomas-st 10  
 Vauxhall lane—Lawley-st to Bloomsbury,  
 Vauxhall grove, Vauxhall-lane, 13  
 Vittoria street—Graham-st to Wharstone-lane, 11, 12  
 Vinegar st—Bristol-road to Pershore-road, 2

**U.**

Union street—High-st to Cherry-st 6,  
 Union passage—Union-st to Bull-st 6  
 Union terrace, Vauxhall-road  
 Unite street—Gt. Hampton-row to John-st West

**W.**

Walmer lane, New Town-row, 15  
 Warwick street—Alcester-st to Warner's-lane, 5  
 Warwick road, Camp-hill, 5  
 Warner's lane—Bradford-st to Bordesley, 5  
 Water street—Snowhill to Church-st 11  
 Water lane—Lawley-st to Coventry-road, 5, 9  
 Ward street—Tower-st to Summer-lane, 15  
 Ward street, Hockley  
 Waterloo place, Moor-street  
 Waterloo street—Temple-row to Ann-st 7  
 Weaman street—Steelhouse-lane to Bath-st 10, 11  
 Weaman row, St. Mary's, 10  
 Well street—Hockley to John-st West, 12, 16  
 Well street, Pinfold st  
 Wellington road—Bristol-road to Edgbaston Church  
 West parade, Edgbaston  
 Wharf street—Suffolk-st to Bridge-st 7  
 Wharf street—Winsor-st to Lawley-st 9  
 Wharstone lane—Hall-st Hockley, and Summer-hill  
 Whittall street—Steelhouse-lane to Bath st 12  
 Willis street—Lister-st to Gt. Brook-st 13  
 William street Communication-row, Martin-st 3  
 William street North—Summer-lane to Hospital-st 11  
 Windmill hill, Holloway-head  
 Windmill street Horse Fair, 2  
 Winsor street—Vauxhall to Lister-st 9, 13  
 Witton street—Garrison-lane to New Dartmouth-st  
 Woodcock street Gosty green to Prospect-row, 10, 14  
 Worcester street—New-st to Smallbrook-st 6  
 Wood street—Moor-st to Park-st 10  
 Worcester road, Briso-road, 2

**Y.**

York street—Lancaster-st to Staniforth-st 10

*C. Watson, Printer, Temple-st. Birmingham*

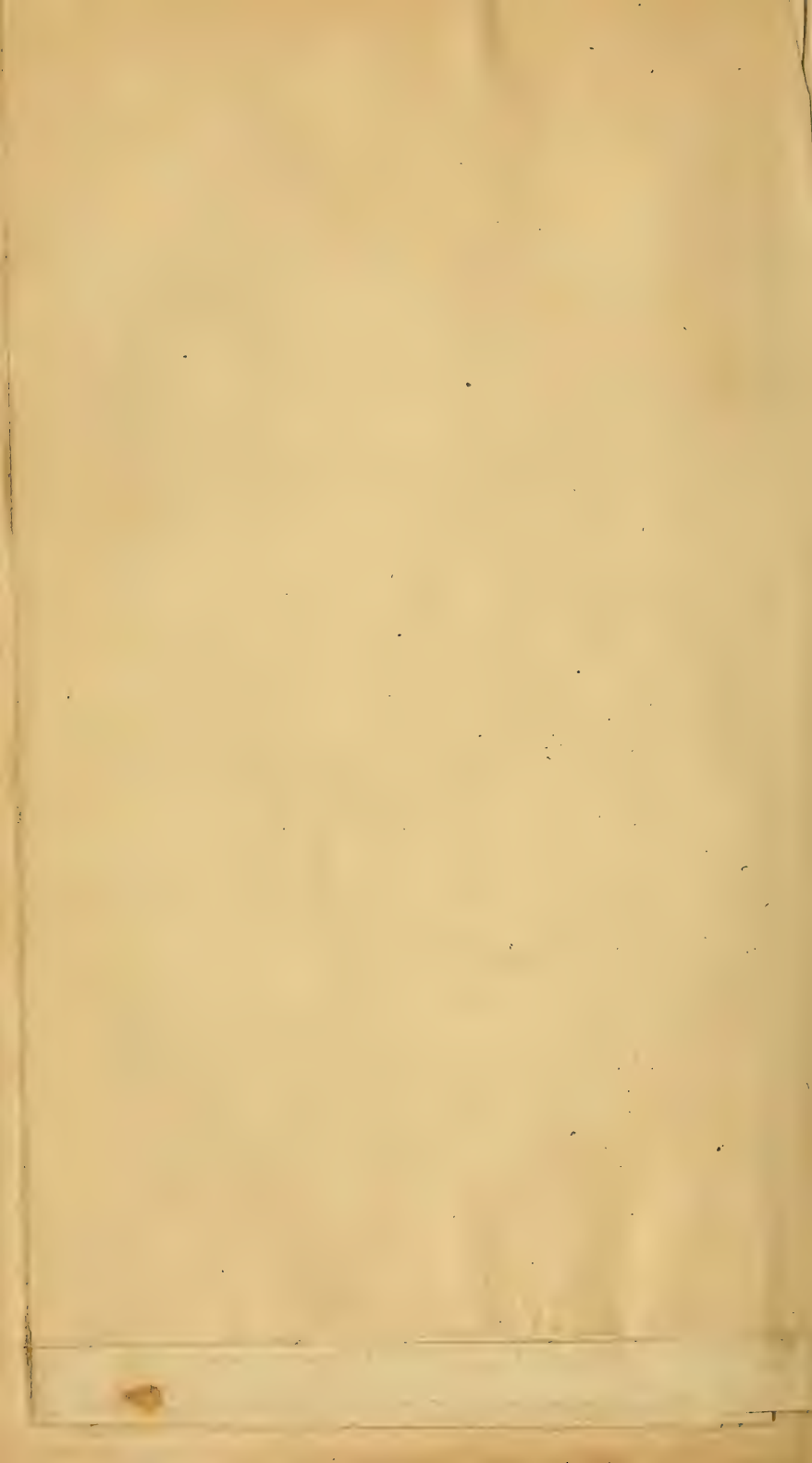


Aston-st to Baggot-st 10, 14  
 Summer-hill to Ha ley-row, 4, 8  
 Snowhill to Livery-st 10  
 Shirlock-st to Moseley-road, 1, 5, 6  
 Bordesley to Warwick-st 5  
 Vauxhall-st to Graham-st 11  
 Highgate  
 Bradford-st  
**N.**  
 Queen-st to Foredrough-st 7  
 High-st to Paradise-st 6, 7  
 Ann-st to Mount-st 7  
 8, 11  
 Lancaster-st to Walmer-lane, 15  
 Steelhouse-lane to Lichfield-st 10  
 Temple-row to New-st 6  
 Summer-hill to Cottage-lane, 8  
 Sand-pits  
 Bloomsbury  
 Doe-st to Hick's-square, 10  
 Suffolk-st to Foredrough-st 7  
 James-st to Constitution-hill, 11  
 place—Vauxhall-lane, 13  
**O.**  
 Broad-st Mill-st 7  
 New town-row, Asylum road, 15  
 Digbeth to Bordesley-st 6  
 Lister-st to Love-lane, 14





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street-making, and upon these we graft our own. The inhabitants of Birmingham may justly be styled *Masters of Invention*: the arts are obedient to their will. But if genius displays herself in the shops, she is seldom seen in the streets: though we have long practised the art of making streets, we have an art to learn; there is not a street in the whole town but might have been better constructed.

When land is appropriated for a street, the builders are under no control; every lessee proceeds according to his interest, or fancy; there is no man to preserve order, or prescribe bounds; hence arise evils without a cure: such as a narrowness, which scarcely admits light, cleanliness, pleasure, health, or use; unnecessary hills, like that in Bull Street; sudden falls, owing to the floor of one house being laid three feet lower than the next, as in Coleshill Street; one side of a street, like the deck of a ship, gunnel to, several feet higher than the other, as in Snow Hill, New Street, Friday Street, Paradise Row, Lionel Street, Suffolk Street, Brick Kiln Lane, and Great Charles Street. Hence also that crowd of enormous bulk sashes; steps, projecting from the houses and the cellars; buildings which, like men at a dog-fight, seem rudely to crowd before each other; pent-houses, rails, pallisades, &c. which have long called for redress.

Till the year 1769, when the Lamp Act was obtained, there was only two powers to correct these evils; the Lord of the Manor and the freeholders; neither of which were exerted. The Lord, so far from preserving the rights of the public, that he himself became the chief trespasser. He connived at small encroachments in others to countenance his own. Others trespassed like little rogues, but he like a lord. In 1728, he seized a public, building, called the Leather Hall, and converted it to his private use. George Davis, the constable, summoned the

inhabitants to vindicate their right ; but none appearing, the Lord smiled at their supineness, and kept the property. In about 1745, he took possession of the Bull Ring, their little market-place, and began to build it up ; but although the people did not bring their action, they did not sleep as before, for they undid in the night what he did in the day. In 1758, when the houses at No. 3 were erected, in that extreme narrow part of Bull Street, near the Welch Cross, the proprietor, emboldened by repeated neglects, chose to project half a yard beyond his bounds. But a private inhabitant, who was an attorney, a bully, and a freeholder, with his own hands, and a few hearty curses, demolished the building, and reduced the builder to order. But though the freeholders have power over all encroachments within memory, yet this is the only instance upon record of the exertion of that power.

The town consists of about two hundred (now four) streets, some of which acquired their names from a variety of causes, but some from no cause, and others have not yet acquired a name. Those of Bull Street, Cannon Street, and London 'Prentice Street, from the signs of their respective names. The first of these, was originally *Chapel Street*, from a chapel belonging to the priory, which covered that ground now inhabited by Francis Goodall, Esq., and the place of interment extended to the spot now occupied by Charles Greatrex. Some receive their names from the proprietors of the land, as Smalbroke Street, Freeman Street, Colmore Street, Slaney Street, Weaman Street, Bradford Street, Colmore Row, Philip Street, and Bell Street. Digbeth or Duck's Bath, from the pools for accommodating that animal, was originally Well Street, from the many springs in its neighbourhood. Others derive a name from caprice, as Jamaica Row, John and Thomas's Streets. Some from a desire of imitating the metropolis, as Fleet Street, Snow



Hill, Ludgate Hill, Cheapside, and Friday Street. Some again from local causes, as High Street, from its elevation, St. Martin's Lane, Church Street, Cherry Street, originally an orchard, Chapel Street, Bartholomew Lane, Mass-house Lane, Old and New Meeting Streets, Steel-house Lane, Temple Row, and Temple Street, also, Pin-fold Street, from a pinfold at No. 85, removed in 1752. Moor Street, anciently Mole Street, from the eminence on one side, or the declivity on the other. Park Street seems to have acquired its name by being appropriated to the private use of the lord of the manor, and, except at the narrow end next Digbeth, contained only the corner house to the South, entering Shut Lane, No. 82, lately taken down, which was called the Lodge. Spiceal Street, anciently Mercer Street, from the number of mercers' shops ; and as the professors of that trade dealt in grocery, it was promiscuously called Spicer Street. The present name is only a corruption of the last. The spot, now the Old Hinkleys, was a close, till about 1720, in which horses were shewn at the fair, then held in Edgbaston Street. It was since a brick-yard, and contained only one hut, in which the brickmaker slept. The tincture of the smoky shops, with all their *black furniture*, for welding gun-barrels, which afterwards appeared on the back of Smal-broke Street, might occasion the original name *Inkleys* ; ink is well known ; leys, is of British derivation, and means grazing ground ; so that the etymology, perhaps, is *Black Pasture*. The Butts, a mark to shoot at, when the bow was the fashionable instrument of war, which the artist of Birmingham knew well how to make, and to use. Gosta Green (Goose Stead) a name of great antiquity, now in decline ; once a track of commons, circumscribed by the Stafford Road, now Stafford Street. The roads to Lichfield and Coleshill, now Aston and Coleshill Streets, and extending to Duke Street, the boundary of the manor.

Perhaps, many ages after, it was converted into a farm, and was, within memory, possessed by a person of the name of Tanter, whence Tanter Street.

Sometimes a street fluctuates between two names, as that of Catherine and Wittal, which at length terminated in favour of the latter. Thus the names of Great George and Great Charles stood candidates for one of the finest streets in Birmingham, which after a contest of two or three years, was carried in favour of the latter. Others receive a name from the places to which they direct, as Worcester Street, Edgbaston Street, Dudley Street, Lichfield Street, Aston Street, Stafford Street, Coleshill Street, and Alcester Street.

A John Cooper, the same person who stands in the list of donors in St. Martin's Church, and who, I apprehend, lived about two hundred and fifty years ago, at the Talbot, now No. 20, in the High Street, left about four acres of land, between Steelhouse Lane, St. Paul's Chapel, and Walmer Lane, to make lovedays for the people of Birmingham; hence *Love-day Croft*. Various sounds from the trowel upon the premises, in 1758, produced the name of *Love-day Street* (corrupted into *Lovely Street*). This croft is part of an estate under the care of Lench's Trust; and, at the time of the bequest, was probably worth no more than ten shillings per annum. At the top of Walmer Lane, which is the north-east corner of this croft, stood about half a dozen old almshouses, perhaps erected in the beginning of the seventeenth century, then at a considerable distance from the town. These were taken down in 1764, and the present almshouses, which are thirty-six, erected near the spot, at the expense of the trust, to accommodate the same number of poor widows, who have each a small annual stipend, for the supply of coals. This John Cooper, for some services rendered to the lord of the manor, obtained three privileges—that of regulating the

goodness and price of beer, consequently he stands in the front of the whole liquid race of high tasters ; that he should, whenever he pleased, bait a bull in the bull-ring, whence arises the name ; and, also be allowed interment in the South Porch of St. Martin's Church. His memory ought to be transmitted with honour to posterity, for promoting the harmony of his neighbourhood, but he ought to have been buried on a dunghill, for punishing an innocent animal. His wife seems to have survived him—she also became a benefactress, is recorded in the same list, and their monument, in antique sculpture, is yet visible in the Porch.

## THE POLITICAL UNION.

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THIS Institution has been created, answered the immediate purposes for which it was formed, and is now in a state of suspended animation ; ready to rise at the first call, and renew the contest for the remaining portion of our civil rights. Should it, however, be disposed to " Sleep on now and take its rest," history will not let it be buried in oblivion. She will record its deeds in her pages, and hand them down to posterity, as the most remarkable and bloodless victories ever achieved by the united people of any country, in any age. As much honour is due to this association, for its efforts in gaining the great Bill of Reform, we shall proceed to detail its history fully and fairly. We will first glance over the principal efforts to obtain a reform by other parties, who paved the way, and in some degree prepared the public mind for the changes effected by this measure. For many years, the subject had occupied the attention of the greatest statesmen. In 1783, Mr. Pitt declared, that no honest man could administer the affairs of this country, without a reform in the Commons' House of Parliament. May 6, 1793, the present Earl Grey, then Charles Grey, Esq., offered to prove on oath, that eighty-four individuals, did by their own authority, send one hundred and fifty-seven members to parliament; and that a decided majority of the house was returned by one hundred fifty-four peers and rich commoners. A petition, containing these facts, emanating



from a society called, "The Friends of the People," was presented by Mr. Grey, their official organ. He made an attempt in 1797, and also in 1800, but failed, and from this date, till the period when his majesty called him to his councils, after the resignation of the Duke of Wellington, he remained silent upon this subject. Motions were repeatedly made by the leading men of the time, for reform, but always unsuccessfully. Societies were formed to promote the cause, and it appeared in a fair way for success, when the excesses of the Parisians arrested its progress, and its principal advocates were ashamed or afraid to proceed. The peace of 1814 gave time for its consideration, and the distress of the following years, gave it an impetus and importance it at no former time possessed; but wily and unprincipled men were at the head of affairs, who scrupled not to adopt the policy of the revolutionary rulers of France, which they had so long and frequently execrated. The spies sent through the country, to get up plots to entrap the unwary, aided very materially in opening the eyes of the people, and increased their affection for "the good old cause."

The people's petitions were answered, by the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in 1817, and by fine, imprisonment, and slaughter, in the following years. Major Cartwright, who had been labouring in the cause for many years, succeeded in establishing associations, under the title of Hampden Clubs, throughout the kingdom. One was established in Birmingham in 1815, but after agitating the question of reform for two years, during the whole of which time, they were completely beset by government spies, and narrowly escaped with their lives, it broke up. (See page 82 to 84.) They imprisoned some, and silenced others, but still man spoke to man, of the iniquity of their proceedings, and the cause silently and securely progressed to break out like the waters

forced into a subterraneous channel, where it never had been expected, and never could be arrested. In 1819, Mr. Attwood consulted his friends on the propriety of forming a Political Union, for the redress of grievances, but the times were too gloomy and portentous then to hope for success, and he was dissuaded. The events of the following years, excited the hopes of those who were already persuaded that no reform could be gained, but by an overwhelming expression of the people's will, while others began to despair of ever having our wrongs redressed by peaceable means.

The fifteen years following the peace, with the exception of the sudden and short lived prosperity of 1824 and 1825, were years of almost uninterrupted distress. Workmen were under the necessity of wandering from place to place, to obtain "leave to toil," and the masters were unable to grant the request. The peasantry, with their wretched wives and children, were a ruined people. Their bodily powers impaired, their moral qualities degraded, innocence and cheerfulness had fled, with the last vestige of self dependence and comfort, from their humble dwellings. Thousands of workmen and labourers sought in another land, that peace and comfort their forefathers had formerly enjoyed in this. It was useless to look to the parliament for relief. Its members were too high born, and too much absorbed in fashionable follies, to contemplate the distress of those beneath them. At three different times was this subject brought before the house, and they literally refused with the greatest levity, to allow its investigation. Mr. Western gave notice of a motion to inquire into the causes of the national distress, in 1822. Mr. Davenport gave notice of a similar motion in 1827; and in 1829, Sir Richard Vivian brought the subject again before parliament; the whole of these propositions were rejected, and their supporters treated with laughter. How

could this be otherwise, when the rights and interests of the mass of the people were not represented there. The great aristocratical interests were well represented, the landed interest, the church, the law; the monied interests were all well represented, but industry and trade, had scarcely any advocates within those walls.

During the above named years, millions were voted away to uphold the church. The landed interest was, and now is, supported by monopolies, injurious to society in general; and the monied interest escaped, by paying only a small proportion of the heavy taxation. Even the giving of members to large towns, proposed by one who afterwards brought forward a motion more worthy his house and name, was rejected; and the still smaller measure of transferring the franchise from a constituency convicted of bribery and corruption, to a large town, met the same fate. The causes of this conduct are clearly perceived, when we examine how the house was constituted. The majority of the members being returned, as before stated, by one hundred and fifty-four individuals, who are reported to have bargained with the ministry for the votes of their nominees. More than one hundred members were exposed to the suspicion of having their judgments biassed by the public purse.

These things explain the conduct which puts the patriot and honest man to the blush, and will make the parliament of 1820, for ever infamous in the annals of the country. The nation continually becoming more enlightened, from the varied and numerous means taken to improve the public mind, could not long view these abuses with equanimity of temper. The delusions which the Tories had so long employed to keep the good things to themselves, were fast passing away. Good men became alarmed, lest the conviction daily gaining ground, that the people had been the dupes of a faction, should

hurry them into measures that none could direct, and none control. Indeed, men not remarkable for foresight, became apprehensive of danger. They saw the public mind ripe and ready for action, and knew not how to pass through the coming calamities, when it should have flung off control. It therefore required some genuine patriots to step forward and direct the public mind, ere it choose to direct itself.

Under these circumstances, then, it was considered necessary to form a General Political Union, and organization of the middle and industrious classes. A meeting was held, January 25, 1830, at Mr. Beardsworth's Repository, Cheapside, for this purpose. A council was appointed to inquire, consult, and report from time to time, upon the legal rights due to the people, and to determine what political measures it would be advisable to have recourse to, that public opinion might not be scattered and diffused throughout the country, or concealed within the breasts of individuals. To collect and concentrate into influential masses, the wishes, the wants, and the opinions of the people, and direct them in a legal and proper course. No desire was entertained to do others wrong, but justice was sought for themselves and their country. At the conclusion of Mr. Attwood's address, he made the following declaration to the fifteen thousand of his fellow-townsmen assembled. "I feel it my duty to declare to you, that I know my country to be on the verge of dreadful calamities. It may be thought, because I come forward now, that I shall be ready 'come weal, come woe,' to head you through thick and thin, through the dark and dreary seasons which are approaching. As far as law will justify me, I will go with you, but if the elements of law and order are disorganized, I will go with you no farther."

An attempt was made to prevent the formation of the



union, under the plea that the leader was but a young reformer, and being a banker, desired to have a re-issue of paper money, because more profitable to him than a gold currency; but it most signally failed, he having declared, that, in his opinion, the distress then endured was mainly to be attributed to the change of the currency, but that he cared not, whether our burdens were reduced to a level with our means, or our means raised to the level of our burdens, and not oblige us to fulfil contracts made in a currency fifty per cent. less valuable than the present. The council were also to prevent and redress, as far as practicable, all local wrongs and oppressions, and all local encroachments upon the rights, interests, and privileges of the community.

No greater proof need be required that the union had been formed at the proper time, to be of use to the country at large, than the success which attended its efforts. Before the close of the first year, two thousand two hundred members were enrolled, subscribing from four shillings to two guineas per annum. Letters and messages were received from many of the nobility, expressing their cordial approbation of the objects of the union, and what was of more importance, advice was given by various lawyers of eminence, to guide the council in the intricate path on which it had entered.

Many parts of the United Kingdom, followed the example of Birmingham, and unions were formed at London, Nottingham, Coventry, Keighley, Bolton, Stow-in-the-Wold, Manchester, Leeds, and Huddersfield. The parent union already commanded some of that attention it afterwards so pre-eminently gained, and never abused.

As it had frequently been urged that the reformers were a dissatisfied set of men, who could not agree among themselves upon the measure of reform necessary, and therefore it could not reasonably be expected, that any one

of the government, should devise a plan to satisfy the multitudinous opinions prevalent among them. The council, therefore, thought proper to remove this objection, by adopting some comprehensive measure, as a rallying point for all good reformers. As no measure then before the public, sufficiently digested, appeared so likely to answer this end, as a bill introduced to the house of Commons, by the Marquis of Blanford, that was adopted, and one thousand five hundred copies of a declaration thereon, printed and circulated. At a general meeting, at which this measure was adopted, the following resolutions were also unanimously passed.

“That the following medal be adopted as the badge of the union, attached to a ribbon, on which is enwoven the red cross of St. George, quartered by that of St. Andrew, common called, the British Union Jack. A standard that has nobly supported the national honour in foreign climes, and which, we trust, will be equally efficacious in the great moral contest, for recovering the national liberty at home.

“Obverse of the medal—the British lion, rousing himself from slumber; legend above, ‘the safety of the king and of the people;’ legend below, ‘the constitution, nothing less and nothing more.’ Reverse of the medal—the royal crown of England, irradiated; immediately beneath the crown, on a scroll, the words, ‘unity, liberty, prosperity;’ legend above, ‘God save the king;’ legend below, ‘Birmingham Political Union, 25 January, 1830.’”

A gold medal was at the same time presented to Thomas Attwood, Esq. the patriotic and talented chairman of the council, as a token of his services to the union, the town of Birmingham, and the whole British nation. June the 26th 1830, will for ever be memorable in the annals of this country. It was a stormy day, followed by a very stormy night. The lightning split the forest tree, the

rain washed the hills, and inundated the valleys, and the floods carried away the property of the inhabitants of the low country; but it will be more memorable as the day of the late king's demise, and of William the Fourth's accession to the throne.

Every lover of his country, hailed the event with undisguised joy, and from the known opinions and straightforward policy of the Duke of Clarence, it was anticipated that the new King was one of whom we need be proud. The council had determined to express their satisfaction, by joining in the procession, at the proclamation of the new king; but they were redressers of local wrongs, and consequently were not respected by the local authorities. The under sheriff requested that they would not thus express their loyalty to the king. The council, therefore, in courtesy to the under sheriff, joined as individuals.

At the general election, consequent on the accession of his present majesty, the council exerted themselves on a more dignified subject, and not without some success. A declaration of the causes of the national distress was issued, and an address to the electors of the United Kingdom was printed and circulated, calling upon them to pledge the candidates to vote for a reform in the Commons' House, as no other measure would permanently relieve the country; and a deputation was appointed to attend the nomination at Warwick, which was followed by very salutary effects, as will afterwards be seen.

The annual meeting, July 26, 1830, was held three weeks after the time appointed by law, to suit the convenience of Sir Francis Burdett, who presided. The union at this time contained five thousand members, and its yearly income was nearly £1,200. The council were re-elected, and a handsome silver service was presented to Mr. Beardsworth, for the use of his repository, which he had so generously offered upon all occasions. The council

had now gained much of the moral power, which was afterwards successfully exerted. The whole of the United Kingdom looked up to them for direction, and for relief from oppression. Ireland had long been taxed to support a church, an alien to the wishes of the people, and to their devotional feelings. They had long been considered legal outcasts, and the knowledge of their situation created discontent and despair. A people with high national generous sympathies and feelings, which sometimes carry them over the bounds of discretion, could not look with complacency on the connection between themselves and their oppressors. By the exertion of their moral force, they had wrung the relief bill from the right hand of power, but the relief bill was no antidote to the accumulated injuries of centuries. An Irishman came to the council to obtain its interference on their behalf. He represented the wrongs of his country with all the feeling and eloquence which is known to characterize the natives of "the beautiful isle of the west;" and declared that nothing but the repeal of the union could ever remove the evils of his country. The council differed with him in opinion, and issued a declaration to the people of Ireland, in which they wished success to all their efforts to remove the wrongs they had so long suffered, and proceeded as follows:—" *People of Ireland*, if you should succeed in obtaining a repeal of the union, we cannot think it would relieve your distress, unless a thorough reform in the Irish house of parliament be first effected. Three hundred years of misery must have convinced you that it would not. Scotland has not been injured by the union; Wales has not been injured by the union; it is doubtful whether Ireland has been injured by the union; we think she has not. She has only borne her common share in the common calamities, but not possessing the influence of England, those calamities have fallen upon her with a deadly pressure."



It further called upon them to unite to gain a reform in the house of commons, as there alone could their grievances be redressed. Now it was that the Duke of Wellington, then premier, made the famed announcement that no reform would take place during his administration; and that no reform was wanted. The spirit of the council appeared to rise under the difficulties which had unexpectedly arisen. A petition of rights was drawn up, "claiming and demanding" a restitution of those birthrights they had been deprived of during the last hundred and thirty years. Means were taken to petition the king to dismiss his ministers; when the house of commons did its duty, and gave universal satisfaction to the nation. The union congratulated the nation in general upon the change which had taken place in his majesty's councils, and expressed the pleasure they received from the pledges of the new ministry; and the people were invited to come forward to assist the king and his councillors to rid the nation for ever of the domineering borough faction. At the latter part of the Duke of Wellington's administration, the once noble peasantry of England were goaded to madness by the miseries they endured. They saw not the miseries of others, but their own were pre-eminently before them, and misguidedly believed; they were created by local oppressors. With this impression, they stole out in the silence of night, and fired the property of those they hated; adding misery to misery, and widening the distance between themselves, and their equally ruined employers. The new administration tried them by special commissions, and numbers were condemned to die. The council petitioned the King to extend his mercy to these miserable men, but without effect. William Cobbett, Esq. was arraigned, July 7th, 1831, in the Court of King's Bench, before Lord Tenterden, and a special jury, for a libel published in the Register of the 11th December, 1830; headed "Rural

war;" alleged to have been written with a view to excite the peasantry to further acts of the above description. The government who carried on this prosecution, it will be remembered, was a Whig government, and most signally they failed. Mr. Cobbett defended himself in person, and summoned as witnesses, Lord Brougham, Lord Radnor, Lord Melbourne, and many other persons of distinction, landowners, &c. It was in times of this critical description, when no man's life or property was safe, and every description of prosecution was aimed against the press; and indeed against every other person who dared to council the people, that the council had to act the part they were all through so successful in maintaining. It will also be observed, that the Whigs were as little disposed to grant reform, as the Tories; but it was wrung from them by the resistless power of the unions.

When the measure of reform was made known, nothing could exceed the joy of the people at its completeness. The whole of the United Kingdom expressed their gratitude to the *King* and his ministers, and their determination to support and carry them through the opposition which was sure to be raised against them. "Never believe," said Mr. D. B. Attwood, "that the people of England, who have always claimed courage as their birthright, and boasted that their country was the native land of freedom, would either shrink from the contest, or be overpowered while struggling in her sacred cause." "The unions," said Mr. Thomas Attwood, "has condensed the moral power of this great population, and gathered it as it were into an electrical mass, which is powerful to every good purpose, and utterly impotent to every bad one. Suppose, for instance, our good king should meet difficulties in his path, from the pertinacity of the oligarch; suppose they should refuse to obey the laws, and make fight upon the occasion, why the very moment he commands us, we would

produce a national guard, that would be like a wall of fire around his throne. It is not too much to say, that if the king requires it, we could in this district produce within a month, two armies equally as numerous and as brave as that which conquered at Waterloo."

This language gave great umbrage to the tory party, who in their organ, the *Quarterly Review*, published two months before the usual time, said, "To all political associations we are declared enemies on principle, but if a body like the Birmingham Political Union, is to be permitted to bully the authorities, and to threaten the land with civil war, they must be encountered by a similar confederacy." Certainly there was [a confederacy of the inhabitants of Birmingham, with the intent to follow the king and his ministers. Determined to gain what they had so frequently prayed the legislature to grant, and which had always been sternly refused. For this purpose, in general meetings assembled, "they pledged themselves individually and collectively, zealously to support their sovereign and his ministers in every possible way their assistance may be required to carry this great and comprehensive plan of reform which his majesty has graciously authorised his ministers to bring forward." They also prayed the house of commons to adopt the measure. Every county, city, and borough in the United Kingdom, rose as one man to express their determination to have "the bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill." The union did all that lay in their power to effect the same object. They assembled together, they petitioned the parliament, they expressed their gratitude to the king and his ministers, and they marched twenty miles to the county meeting, and added vigour to the determination of the assembled multitude. But the house of commons had been elected when Tory favours were liberally expended, and the people were as one without hope. and never

expected to triumph over the party which had so long ruled the nation. Though the bill was read a second time by a majority of one, it was rejected in committee. The king, his ministers, and the people were not to be thus cheated of a measure on which they had set their affections. As soon as the rejection of the bill was known, his majesty resolved to dissolve the parliament in person.

There was some delay in getting ready the state carriages, but his majesty exclaimed, "Bring me a hackney coach, for I am determined to do my duty." When the first signal gave notice of the king's approach, the house of lords presented a scene of indescribable confusion; the loud boom of the cannon could no more be heard in the tumult; many rose together to speak on the important occasion, and straining their voices to the utmost pitch, uttered confused, incoherent, and passionate language; as the king entered the house, the cry of treason broke from the lips of some intemperate senator. The "loud hubbub wild," did not subside until his majesty stepped upon the throne, and as he made the celebrated declaration in reference to the reform bill, "I will appeal to my people," the lords fully perceived the utter discomfiture which had overtaken them. But though the decisive charge had thus been made, the victory was not won without many a hard contest, and many a determined struggle. A town's meeting was immediately called by the council, to express the gratitude to his majesty, which the people felt at his magnanimous conduct. "This is an occasion," said Mr. T. Attwood, "in which a patriot king has placed himself at the head of his people, in the great cause of recovering the lost liberty and happiness of this great and glorious, but long misgoverned and oppressed nation." "I have read much of history, and most of the great events which history records, are deeply engraven on



my mind ; but among all those events, I cannot call to my mind, one in which more true wisdom, virtue, courage, and patriotism were displayed, than has been exhibited by our gracious sovereign." The meeting was held in Mr. Beardsworth's repository, and was much more numerous than any one hitherto called ; nothing could exceed its unanimity and determination. Indeed the people were now thoroughly roused. "I shall not" said a member of parliament in his place, "put forth any vaunting defiance of that giant power, which now sleeps, a faithful servant, at our feet, which has never put forth its strength, but in our defence, but against which, if ever it should turn in madness upon its masters, no defiance can avail." But some of the clergymen of Birmingham, thought proper to defy the wishes of the inhabitants, who were determined to have every church bell pealing with gladness on this day. The opposition was like the bulrush, bearing up against the flood, only to be bent and broken. They had locked up the belfries, and taken the keys away ; but the people had elected their own warden, who forced the doors, the bells soon swung merrily their joyful notes ; a general illumination closed in the day of joy. The people were not merely to express their gratitude and overflow with joy ; steps were to be taken to ensure the return of reform candidates, for this purpose, the council issued an address to the inhabitants of the United Kingdom, which, after having said that the king had done his duty, and that some noblemen had given up millions sterling in borough patronage, it proceeded.

"FRIENDS AND FELLOW COUNTRYMEN. By the liberty which our forefathers earned with their blood—by the long glories of our dear country—by the duties which you owe to your king, your children, and yourselves —by the hoarded wrongs which you have endured—by the British hearts which you have in your bosoms—by the sufferings of

millions of your countrymen, ridden down under the hoof of a sordid and remorseless oligarchy—we implore you to come forward and discharge your duty, peacefully, legally, and effectually, upon this great occasion. Forget for awhile, all private interests, all private animosities. Let these be offered up on the altar of your country's safety. Let no violence or discord contaminate your sacred cause. Let no cares or occupations prevent you coming forward at the great call of a patriot king."

It then called upon the electors to vote for no candidate not pledged to carry the bill of reform entire, and concluded by praying for the present and eternal welfare of the king. A meeting was also called of the electors resident in Birmingham, to agree upon the best means of carrying the bill of reform into a law of the land, and a deputation was appointed, to attend the Warwick election, to ensure the return of reform candidates; but in consequence of the conduct of the union at the last election, none but reform candidates presented themselves, and members pledged to reform, were therefore returned without opposition. It was not only in Birmingham and the county of Warwick, that the union exerted itself, but through the whole of the kingdom; and the intensest interest was felt for the success of the contest, in the remotest borough; the states of the various polls were daily posted in the windows of the coach office, the newspaper offices, and even in private houses, and joy shone on the face of the people, when the cause of reform was seen to triumph over the arts of its enemies.

Let us pause for awhile and take a concise view of the minor subjects upon which the council exercised its power, we shall here merely notice that their efforts in the burial ground business will be narrated in the account of St. Martyn's church, and proceed to give a brief narration of their conduct in the free school affair. When it was found

necessary to take down the old school, and erect one more commodious, the governors thought proper to conform to the will of the donor, by obtaining an act to rebuild the school, to instruct the children of the inhabitants of the town in Latin grammar. But this was generally believed to be a good opportunity to extend the advantages evidently agreeable to the intentions of the royal donor, by erecting a school for instructing the scholars in learning more consonant with the wants and spirits of the age. A town's meeting was called to have the sanction of the inhabitants which was necessary before the act could be obtained, when this plan was proposed by a deputation of the council and carried by a large majority, in opposition to the governors. The governors introduced a clause into the act disgraceful to themselves and unjust to the majority of the inhabitants; a clause which made dissenters ineligible to the office of governors. The dissenters nobly came forward and fought the battle for themselves, though a deputation from the council ensured them the victory. The council also exerted themselves against the stopping of foot-paths, flogging in the army, the taxes on knowledge, and the Newtown Barry massacre. The currency also occupied much of their attention, indeed it was a prevailing theme with the chairman. Petitions were frequently sent to parliament, and the prime minister memorialized on the subject, but as their efforts led to no results, we shall not pursue the subject.

October 11, 1830, a great and memorable dinner was given in Mr. Beardsworth's repository, to commemorate the recent glorious revolution in France. To those unacquainted with the extent and remarkably apt accomodation of these magnificent premises it will appear more as a tale of fiction than reality, when we assert that not fewer than three thousand seven hundred persons sat down to dinner under one roof. Such, however, was the case. The

repository is formed of three sections, of an oblong ; the fourth being the owner's residence and out-houses. The longest part of the building, the whole of which is galleried round, is one hundred and eight yards. On this occasion there were six tables running parallel the whole length, besides fourteen tables filling the broad area of the repository. The preparatory arrangements for a dinner of such immense magnitude were admirable ; the party was divided into *sets*, a steward being appointed to every twenty individuals. These officers were distinguished by a neat flag, on the one side of which, was tastefully coloured the British jack ; and on the other, the French tricolour. The quantity of provisions, all of which were of the best description and quality, will afford some idea of the amazing extent of the dinner. Three thousand five hundred pounds of butcher's meat was placed upon the tables, consisting of rounds and loins of beef, fillets of veal, hams, legs of pork, legs of mutton, &c. Each man was allowed a pint of beer to dinner, and a quart of ale afterwards. The scene before the party took their seats, was the most picturesque imaginable, and strongly reminded the cursory observer of the mosaic pavements, as given in some of our old and popular pictures. The stewards, two hundred in number, entered the repository at twelve o'clock ; soon afterwards, the band took its place in the orchestra, having in the front about fifty glee and chorus singers. THOMAS ATTWOOD, Esq. entered the building about the same time, accompanied by many members of the council. At half-past one, Mr. Attwood, as chairman of the Union took the chair, the trumpets immediately sounded attention, when the whole assembly being uncovered, the chairman asked blessing in the following words, " God, we thank thee for the good things which are set before us, and we implore thy blessing on our righteous cause. When the tables were cleared, *Non nobis Domine*, was



sung in the most effective style, by fifty professional singers ;” after which, the chairman gave “ Our gracious Sovereign, King William the Fourth, may God prolong his reign, for the liberty and happiness of the people.” —Song, “ *God save the King.*”

The chairman again rose, and said “ The 26th of July will be for ever memorable in the history of the world, it was on that day, the edicts of a tyrant were issued, and the French people, animated by one spirit, rose like one man, to vindicate the violated liberties of their country; their king issued one mandate, virtually abolishing their house of commons, and another really abolishing the liberty of the press.” But, “ in three days, the inhabitants of Paris, burst asunder the shackles which fifteen years of fraud, tyranny, and guilt, had forged for the nations of Europe.” He then gave “ Honour, gratitude, and prosperity, to the noble people of France.” Glee and chorus “ *Our chartered rights.*” Many other patriotic toasts were given, and the “ Union hymn,” “ The Marseillois hymn,” “ The Trumpet of Liberty,” and “ The Gathering of the Union,” were sung. The chairman closed the meeting as follows : “ I have made many friends, it seems, and perhaps some enemies. Certainly I have had a great deal to contend with, and have had occasion for some little nerve. Many of my friends endeavoured to alarm me with all manner of terrible representations; they told me I should set in motion a tremendous principle, which no human power could control; that I should, like Frankenstein, create a monster of gigantic strength, endued with life but not with reason, that would hunt me about the earth to my own destruction. Look around, now, upon this peaceful and magnificent assemblage, are we not here met, all friends of the law, and as for me, what possible danger do I incur, I am like a father in the midst of a numerous family, or like a general surrounded by his faithful soldiers, with

none who would not follow me to death in a righteous cause. When the Barons of Runnymede recovered the liberties of England from the tyrant John, they took up the bow and the spear, and the battle-axe and the sword, and they were justified in so doing; but our weapons are, union, truth, justice, and reason, our sword is the 'sword of the spirit,' which is the will of the people. We will now part with the concluding toast, 'Peace and goodwill to all mankind.' The band played "God save the King," and the whole of the immense company immediately retired to their homes.

At the elections, the people nobly answered the call of the king and his ministers. The Duke of Newcastle, who had formerly returned two members for Newark, and two for the county of Notts. at large, now found his interest reduced to four rotten boroughs, where no man could interfere with him. The Duke of Beaufort's brother and his eldest son, both justly popular noblemen, were thrown out, solely because they opposed the reform bill. The Duke of Rutland's nominees were rejected in his own county. In Northumberland, the minister's son, who had not ventured in the field at the former election, was returned, notwithstanding the indolence of his friends. In short, out of eighty-two county members, seventy-six were returned, pledged to reform; the members for cities and great towns, were for it to a man. Ireland returned a great majority, and even Scotland, the borough-ridden Scotland, returned a majority of friends to reform.

The bill was again introduced to the commons, on the 15th of June, and was detained by the arts of its adversaries, until the 22nd of the following September. The length of time it was detained in the commons, and the great anxiety for its fate, when it should reach the lords, occasioned much discontent; therefore on July the 28th, the council again petitioned the commons.

The petitioners thought the nation had at the late election, returned members convinced of the necessity of reform. But regretted to observe, that more attention was paid to the frivolous objections of individuals, than to the wishes and determinations of an united people.

“Your petitioners have observed with disgust and indignation, the factious and puerile opposition made to the opinions of a majority of your honourable house, and to the demands of an oppressed and insulted people; and with feelings of a nearly similar character, they contrast the rapidity with which measures of penalty and spoliation have been enacted by former parliaments, with the extraordinary tardiness at present displayed, in completing a wholesome and healing measure of wisdom, justice, and conciliation.” The petition also reminded the house, that the distress of the nation required immediate attention, and effectual remedies, which could not be enacted so long as an interested minority were allowed to offer an obstinate and factious opposition to the majority. They therefore strenuously urged the commons to observe a dispatch demanded by justice and the will of a mighty nation.

The Tories were highly chagrined at the large majorities by which every effort of theirs was defeated. They were continually calling upon the ministers to prosecute and abolish the unions; they could not even allow the minister to acknowledge the thanks of the unionists, without calling the proceeding in question. “The Birmingham Political Union,” said Sir Charles Wetherell, “doubtless a very respectable body of men, had addressed a letter to the noble lord; he was very sorry to observe that the prime minister of this country had recognised such a body. Might he be permitted to ask the quoters of Selden and other great constitutional authorities, whether it was the practice of the times to which they referred, for the first minister of the crown to recognise and

acknowledge an usurping body of men, a self-constituted corporation." Earl Grey, was also accused, in the other house, of the same "impropriety;" but he answered, that the unions were in existence when he came into power, and if they were the dangerous and illegal bodies represented, they should have been crushed in their infancy and not have been allowed to gather strength and maturity.

The bill had passed the commons by a large majority, and the people anxiously followed its progress to the lords, into whose house it was introduced immediately. The council saw it was time to be up and doing, and a great meeting was called of the inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood, to be held on Newhall Hill, a large piece of vacant ground, in the northern suburbs of the town, between the Parade, Camden Street, Albion Street, Graham Street, &c., for the purpose of demonstrating to the house of lords, the enthusiasm so generally entertained for the bill, and to petition them to pass it without delay. The ground upon which the meeting was held consists of twelve acres of rising ground, in the form of an amphitheatre; the scene was peculiarly animating and picturesque, numerous banners waved above the heads of one hundred thousand human beings, twenty thousand of whom came from Staffordshire, to express the same enthusiasm and anxiety as the Birmingham Union. "I have been told," said Mr. Attwood, "that with all my immense power I shall not be able to control the oligarchs, but I answer, we will get two hundred thousand strings, we will place each of those strings in the hands of a strong and brave man, and we will twist those strings into a thousand ropes, and twist those ropes into one immense cable, and by means of that cable will put a hook into the nose of the leviathan, and guide and govern him at pleasure. We have united two millions peaceably and legally, in one grand and



determined association to recover the liberty, happiness, and prosperity of the country, and I should like to know what power there is in England, that can resist a power like this. It has been said, that for a nation to be free, it is sufficient that she wills it. Who can look around on this immense and magnificent assemblage, in the very heart of England, where the English blood is pure and uncontaminated with foreign alloy, and doubt that the nation wills that the reform bill shall pass." If this language was not sufficient to induce the lords to gratify the desires of the people, threats of a more daring character were made as additional incentives. One speaker expressed his determination that if all other means failed, he would pay no more taxes until the bill became law, and the mighty multitude immediately and spontaneously echoed the sentiment. No concessions had ever been made to the people, until they unequivocally declared that they would wrest those rights from their rulers, they so unjustly withheld. The meeting affirmed, that if all other legal means were unsuccessful, they would adopt the decision of Blackstone, and have arms for their defence. "The peers will find to their unavailing sorrow," said one of the speakers, "that if the lords will not pass the bill, the bill will pass the lords; they will find in fact, that we can spare peers infinitely better than our heart's blood." One of the arguments made use of by the advocates of the bill, was, that its rejection would occasion a revolution, "We have been told," said Lord Wharncliffe, "that the passing of this bill, is the only way to prevent a revolution. It might be more justly said, that passing it under the present circumstances, was the very way to create a revolution." After reading the above extract, he proceeded "Here is a man, who dares the lords to refuse to pass the bill. The whole tenor of the language applies to physical force. Revolution is not only threatened, but begun." "Were we to condemn

the whole," answered Lord Brougham, "because one individual used intemperate language, if this were the case, what was to be said of the house of lords, when last night language grossly intemperate,—language, which violated every principle of law,—language, which held out threats, not merely of sedition, but of something very like capital felony, had been used within the walls of that house?" At the meeting, a petition to the house of lords, imploring them to pass the bill, was adopted, and votes of thanks passed by acclamation to his majesty's ministers, for their manly and patriotic conduct; and at the conclusion of the business, Mr. Attwood called upon the vast multitude to repeat after him, "God bless the king," it was done heartily and fervently. The people then retired to their several homes. During the discussion on the motion for the second reading in the lords, a discussion which was characterised by extraordinary vehemence, the people manifested the most intense anxiety; for four days they surrounded the newspaper offices, waiting the arrival of the London papers, and anxiously canvassed the probabilities for and against their cherished hopes. On the evening of October 8th, no papers came by the early coaches; the feverish state of the public mind became more alarming, if two persons began a conversation upon the subject, crowds immediately surrounded them, and those who were too distant to hear the discussion, ran from group to group, until they obtained a situation near the principal speakers. A pithy expression or a deep curse, would now and then betray the subdued and intense feelings of the hearers. A shout would arise from one of the groups, hundreds would run and surround the group which sent forth the cheer. Presently, persons came and said that there was a man reading a paper at Nelson's monument, a simultaneous rush immediately took place, and there, their worst anticipations were verified, the

funeral knell sent its dismal tone over the town, verifying the gloomy things which had come to pass, and fearfully alarming the public mind. The second reading was lost by a majority of forty-one. The crowds for that night quietly retired to their several homes. The morning light found the black flag flying from the highest pinnacles in the town, the churches hung out the same dismal signal.

Deep regret and bitter disappointment, was felt by the inhabitants, at the rejection of the bill, but though disappointed, they were not cast down, they presented a nobler front, and a sterner determination to carry the measure upon which they had set their affections. The question was anxiously agitated, whether they should then draw the sword, or resume the attitude they had apparently uselessly presented, but this time more majestically; despair was a stranger to their bosoms. They asked the noble head of the opponent band, where would have been the ducal coronet, which now pressed his brows, had Englishmen known despair? It was also asked, who were the lords, that they should thus step in between the people and their just expectations, and ruin the hopes they had so long and anxiously cherished? What were four hundred and twenty lords before twenty millions of people, who at a single word, were ready to march forward and crush them to pieces? Some of them were men of large property, but their property, compared with that of the people, was as dust in the balance; why, then, should they be allowed to endanger the wealth of the country? Of the enormous load of taxes borne by this tax-laden people, the merest fraction of a fraction was borne by them, while themselves, their dependents, and relations, fattened upon the imposts wrung from an oppressed and ruined people; and were not contented, but must sneer at the "philosophy of Birmingham and Sheffield." The spiritual lords endured the greater part of public odium, they were appointed by the law to preach peace and good-

will to all men, and it would better become them to descend from their high places, "where power dwells amid her passions," to visit the poor man, to console his sorrows and heal his broken heart, than mix up in political intrigues, from which no man retires unstained. But the people will soon learn that the bishops, who gave the casting vote against the reform bill, yearly receive from their purses, £528,698, and knowing this, will say, need we continue to pay them? It was further said, that some of them received their elevation, for preaching the courtly doctrine "that kings can do no wrong;" others, as rewards for political pamphlets in aid of a falling cause, and some were elevated at the recommendation of an amorous courtesan. These things, as well as the systematic opposition of nearly the whole corporation of spiritual lords, to the constitutional rights of the people, their rooted attachment to corrupt and corrupting institutions, and political disregard of that holy religion, of which they claim to be pre-eminently the ministers, justly deprived them of the national respect.

Every one but the infatuated opposition, perceived the alarming state of the public mind. "I beg to acknowledge," said Lord John Russell, in his letter to Attwood, "with heartfelt gratitude, the undeserved honour done me by one hundred and fifty thousand of my countrymen. Our prospects are now obscured for a moment, but I trust only for a moment, it is impossible that the whisper of faction should prevail against the voice of a nation." Lord Althorp, after having acknowledged the thanks, said, "I beseech you to use all your influence, not merely to prevent any act of open violence, but any such resistance to the law, as is threatened by the refusal to pay taxes." "It is with the deepest sorrow," wrote one of the members for the county, "I confirm what you have already heard from other sources, that the second reading of the reform bill was



rejected in the house of lords this morning, by a majority of forty-one. God grant, that in the anguish of disappointment, the people may not forget that the observance of tranquility and order, is the surest, safest, and best way of effecting the great purpose which we seek and will have." The dark heavings of the public mind, to an experienced eye, manifested the dreadful severity of the coming storm, which it became the duty of every good man and sincere patriot to avert. Mr. Attwood issued the following address, which acted like magic in stilling the public rage:—

"FRIENDS AND FELLOW COUNTRYMEN. The bill of reform is rejected by the house of lords: Patience! patience! patience! Our beloved king is firm; his ministers are firm; the house of commons is firm; the whole nation is firm; what then have the people to fear? Nothing; unless their own violence should rashly lead to anarchy, and place difficulties in the way of the king and his ministers. Therefore there must be no violence; the people are too strong to require violence. By peace, by law, and by order, every one must rally round the throne of his king. The small majority of the lords will soon come to a sense of the duty which they owe to their country, and to the king; or some other means will be devised of carrying the bill of reform into a law without delay. Fellow countrymen, be patient, be peaceable, be strictly obedient to the law, and every thing is safe. God bless the King."

Owing to the firmness of the king, his ministers, and the house of commons, the decision of the lords was received by the people, except in two or three isolated cases, without any alarming bursts of violence. At Derby the rabble broke open the jail, and demolished the property of some anti-reformers, and were only prevented from the perpetration of further violence by the military. The castle at Nottingham, the property of the Duke of Newcastle, was burned by a band of rioters. Some disturbances took place

in Somersetshire and Devonshire. At Bristol, the arrival of Sir Charles Wetherell, a strenuous anti-reformer, to discharge his judicial duties, excited a popular ferment, which being at first met on the part of the magistrates with precipitate violence, and afterwards by cowardly supineness, hurried the populace on to works of extensive destruction. In every other part of the kingdom, however, large meetings were held, and obedience to the law enforced.

The parliament was prorogued by the king in person, on the 18th of October. In his speech on the occasion, he said, "The anxiety which has been so generally manifested for the accomplishment of a constitutional reform in the commons' house of parliament, will, I trust, be regulated by a due sense of the necessity of order and moderation in their proceedings. To the consideration of this important question, the attention of parliament must necessarily be directed at the opening of the ensuing session; and you may be assured of my unaltered desire to prosecute its settlement, by such improvements in the representation as may be found necessary for securing to my people the full enjoyment of their rights, which in combination with the other orders of the state, are essential to the support of our free constitution." At this time the eye of all England was directed to the movements and intentions of one man, and to the proceedings of the Birmingham Political Union, the work of his hands. The gigantic hold they had obtained upon public feeling and public confidence, and the important station for good or for evil they occupied among the people of the United Kingdom, were viewed with the most intense interest. In their hands were the liberties and destinies of this great country. Though the irritation at the rejection of the bill had subsided, it was not allayed; the council therefore issued another address, in substance as follows:—

“ Our gracious king has again nobly come forward in our extreme need, regardless of opposition, and sent the house of lords into the midst of the people to learn their duty. Lord Grey has declared that the bill of reform shall become law, therefore we will stand by him, and if, by any possibility, he should be driven from power, we will carry him back on the shoulders of the people ; the king, the ministers, the house of commons, and the people are all united, and nothing can break this holy league but discord ; therefore be firm and united. At the same time you show your confidence in ministers ; come forward with union and determination, and express your will, and that *will* is certain to become the law of the land ; yet place your confidence in the king and his ministers, until they shall deceive you. The lords have obtained a temporary triumph, but by the power of the king and the law, we will humble them in the dust. We will have our barricades without violence or the shedding of blood, and accomplish a more glorious revolution, than any recorded in the history of the world.”

It was reported to the council, that several Tory lords and gentlemen, were purchasing arms and ammunition, and generally fortifying their mansions ; it was therefore proposed to organize the union, for the purpose of preserving the peace of the town, protecting the lives and property of individuals, and defending the government and liberty of the nation. A very efficient plan was matured and about to be adopted, when the chairman introduced Mr. Parkes, a gentleman who did the council and the town much sterling service ; and he, in a long, able, and luminous speech, proved the illegality of the proposed organization, it was therefore abandoned. The next day made known how narrowly they had escaped the fangs of the law, a proclamation being plentifully posted about the town, denouncing the plan, and declaring it to be illegal. Its mere contemplation had a wonderful effect upon the public

in general. The Tories, by their loud denouncement of the union, and their gross misrepresentations, betrayed their extreme fear of that body. These misrepresentations were for some time despised, but by being frequently repeated, they began to be believed. The council, therefore, thought proper to issue a declaration of their objects and intentions, to remove the odium which had lavishly been heaped upon them. Further to counteract the effect, an address was presented to the council, signed by forty thousand members of the union, thanking them for the excellent legal and successful manner, in which they had conducted the union through the perils which every where beset their path.

Those unfortunate men, who had been so far enraged at the conduct of the anti-reformers, as to lose all command of themselves, and to riot and destroy the property, and endanger the lives of their opposers, had been tried by special commissions, and some of them condemned to suffer the highest penalty the law awarded. The council lamented the severity of the punishment, and thought proper to present a petition on their behalf, nearly as follows.

The petition of the council to the king, on behalf of the Bristol and Nottingham rioters, in which they disclaimed any intention to justify or excuse the crimes and outrages which were then committed, but they could not conceal the fact, that if the peculiar and unhappy situation in which the country was placed, at the period when these riots occurred, is taken into consideration, circumstances will appear, which, though they cannot in any degree justify, may, perhaps, tend to palliate the guilt of the wretched criminals left for execution. "Owing to a reckless and obstinate opposition, on the part of the advocates of the present corrupt system of parliamentary representation, to the wise and patriotic intentions of



your Majesty's ministers, the people had been kept for many months in a state of the most intense and agitating anxiety; they had centered all their fondest hopes of peace, prosperity, and happiness, on the passing into law of the bill of reform; and at the very hour when they deemed the immediate accomplishment of those hopes certain, the cup of promise was suddenly and rudely dashed from their lips, and, in the disappointment of the moment, they rashly gave way to despair."

"Considering the state of the public mind, and the injuries and insults the people had suffered, it was hoped his Majesty would make allowance for the feeling which hurried them into atrocities, from which, had they have had time for reflection, they would have shrunk with horror." The council could not help making the same distinction between crimes committed in such a state of excitement, as the law wisely made between manslaughter and murder.

"We would venture also to represent to your Majesty, that, in our humble opinion, however much it may, unfortunately, be at variance with the present state of the law, the broad principle of justice requires that man's life should only be forfeited in the atonement of crime, which affects the life of man. Although it is contended, that severity of punishment is necessary to ensure respect for the law, we cannot but think there is such an immeasurable distance, in point of guilt, between crimes which affect property only, that any policy which tends to equalize, in any degree, the punishments of the two kinds of offence, is not only in principle unjust, but is in such direct contradiction to all the ideas and feelings of the great bulk of the community, as to create sympathy instead of repugnance towards the criminals, to convert, in some degree, culprits into martyrs; and thus mainly to

defeat the only object of punishment, the enforcing obedience to the laws.

“We humbly pray your Majesty to take these facts and representations, into your Majesty’s gracious consideration, and we cannot but express our anxious hope, that your Majesty’s wisdom may deem it consistent with the ends of justice, to remit the *extreme* penalty of the law, and to inflict some minor punishment upon the unhappy criminals in question, more consistent with the dictates of humanity, and with the gracious and benevolent sentiments of your Majesty’s paternal heart.”

It could not be seriously believed that the foregoing petition could meet with that attention it deserved, in the critical state of the public mind. It did not divert the course of justice from its usual channels.

About this time several anonymous donations were received by the council to large amounts, all bearing the London post mark.

Parliament was re-assembled on the 6th of December, and on the 12th of the same month, the bill was again introduced to the house of commons; though the bill was essentially the same as that formerly rejected, it was acknowledged by all parties to be its superior in precision of expression, and the minor details, all of which improvements the Tories modestly assumed as theirs. Notwithstanding that the reform members were silent, and left the debate almost entirely to the anti-reformers, the bill was kept in the commons by various arts, until the 26th of March in the following year. The council again petitioned the commons to observe a dispatch commensurate with the importance of the measure, and the expectations of the people; and their jealousy was excited by observing some tampering with the ten-pound clause; inconsistent with the professions of the ministers; a memorial was immediately

dispatched to Earl Grey, explaining the evils of the clause; and the number of persons in large towns who would be disfranchised by its restrictions. Their exertions occasioned the introduction of a clause which empowered the ten-pound householder to have his name inserted in the grand levy book, he paying the rates instead of his landlord; this was some improvement, though the main objection to the bill remained.

The bill finally passed the commons as above stated, on the 26th of March, and was followed to the lords with even more gloomy anticipations than in the preceding sessions. No new peers had been created, and the opposition appeared as stern and inflexible as ever. The first reading passed without much discussion; and the second reading was anticipated with the most intense anxiety. Groups of people assembled in various parts of the town, keenly discussing the conduct of the lords, and the probable consequences of the second rejection of the bill. Many thousands of a pamphlet, entitled *Defensive Instructions for the People*, with other books on the use of fire-arms and weapons of defence were sold, and the council sat daily, ready to act as the emergency required. But before the second reading came on, Lords Harrowby and Wharnccliffe determined to make a concession to the people, by permitting the second reading to pass, with the intention of "improving" the bill in committee; it was therefore carried by a majority of nine, and afforded some relief to the deep anxiety of the people.

The anti-reformers began to console themselves with the idea that a reaction had taken place in the public mind; they not only consoled themselves, but began to make use of the opinion as an argument for making "such alterations in the bill, as should prevent it destroying our glorious constitution." To disprove this belief, the council determined to display a magnificent effect of public enthusiasm. A

meeting was accordingly called for Monday, May the 6th, to be held on Newhall Hill, the place so frequently consecrated to British liberty.

So early as Saturday, the population of the town began to evince symptoms of great excitement, and on Sunday, the roads leading to Birmingham, but more especially the northern roads, showed that the attendance from distant parts of the country would be immense. Some thousands arrived in the course of that day, many of whom came from the extremities of the counties of Worcester, Stafford, and Gloucester; before day-break on Monday all was bustle and preparation. The previous arrangements made by the council, were in themselves admirable, and were executed with precision and punctuality by the various gentlemen to whom they were entrusted. By eight o'clock A.M. the persons appointed to conduct the unions of the various towns in the neighbourhood, that intended visiting the meeting, repaired to their respective stations, on the roads, each mounted on horseback, and decorated or distinguished by a broad sash of office, embroidered with the union jack. Between nine and twelve, the various unions entered Birmingham, all being preceded by bands of music, and exhibiting flags, upon which were inscribed various patriotic devices and mottos. Many of these Unions having arrived at the rooms in Great Charles Street, and the *programme* being all arranged, shortly before twelve o'clock the immense multitude, headed by Thomas Attwood, Esq., and preceded by the Birmingham Union band, in their superb uniform, proceeded to the place of meeting. Looking from the top of Mount Street, up Newhall Street, the spectacle from the countless myriads of which it was composed, and the splendid devices and colours which it exhibited, was truly magnificent. On arriving at Newhall Hill the ground was found completely pre-occupied, and the tops of the houses, as far as the eye could range, appeared,



as completely covered with human beings. The meeting was the most magnificent spectacle ever beheld. At one time there were two hundred thousand people on the ground; at an appropriate distance, on the ridge of the hill, were numerous banners, among which, in the centre, waved the royal standard, and at distant intervals were seen the banners of the Coventry, Warwick, Wolverhampton, Darlaston, Wedensbury, Walsall, Alcester, Broomsgrove, Studley, Stratford-on-Avon, Redditch, and Shirley Unions. The grand northern division was estimated at one hundred thousand persons; the procession was four miles in length, having one hundred banners, and eleven bands of music; the grand western division was two miles in length, and estimated at twenty-five thousand, and exhibited seventy banners; the eastern division consisted of five thousand persons, with thirty banners; and the southern, of ten thousand, with twelve banners and six bands of music. The above estimates are exclusive of the immense numbers who attended the meeting from Birmingham. An incident occurred during the meeting which manifested the deep feeling which exists for unhappy Poland; the Count Napoleon Czapski was recognised among the crowd, by an Irish gentleman, of the Dublin press, who introduced him to a member of the political council. Among the banners displayed at the meeting, there was one from Wolverhampton inscribed, "A Tear for Poland," Czapski little expected that at a meeting for reform, anything would be displayed in favour of Poland, whether of regret or sorrow. His name however was announced to the meeting, and the banner was presented to him, he was sensibly affected; he knew that the inscription expressed something in favour of his unhappy country, but did not know the meaning of the word *tear*; his heart, as he afterwards expressed himself, was more sensible than his head, he wept, and instinctively dried his eyes with that banner on which was inscribed

the simple but beautiful sentiment. But to the meeting. The Tories had for some time endeavoured to persuade themselves, that a reaction had taken place in the public mind, that the zeal which had so long existed in favour of the bill, had worn out; how such an opinion, for it could not have matured to belief, could have obtained among them, it would be difficult to determine. They were, as Mr. Muntz said, never satisfied; "If you are silent, they represent you as indifferent; if active, they say you threaten them; if few in numbers, you are contemptible; if numerous, then dangerous, and they call upon government to interfere; in fact, they resemble the man who never was satisfied when beaten at chess, he always made some objection to the manner in which it was done, whether he received checkmate from queen, castle, bishop, knight, or pawn, he was always discontented." The numbers and determination of the meeting, at once dissipated the idea of reaction, if it were ever seriously entertained. At the commencement of the meeting, at the sound of a trumpet, which was used as the signal of silence, the following spirit-stirring composition was thundered forth by thousands of voices :

Lo! we answer, see, we come,  
Quick at freedom's holy call,  
We come, we come, we come, we come,  
To do the glorious work of all:  
And hark! we raise, from sea to sea,  
The sacred watchword—Liberty.

God is our guide, from field, from wave,  
From plough, from anvil, and from loom,  
We come, our country's rights to save,  
And speak a tyrant faction's doom:  
And hark! we raise, from sea to sea,  
The sacred watchword—Liberty.

God is our guide—no sword we draw ;  
We kindle not war's battle fires ;  
By union, justice, reason, law,  
We claim the birthright of our sires ;  
We raise the watchword—Liberty,  
We will, we will, we will be free.

From the conduct of the lords, when the bill was in their house before, the council had determined never again to petition them on the subject. But the silence they had maintained, which arose entirely from disgust and indignation at the treatment they had received, was called lukewarmness and indifference. "The people were really like greyhounds on the slip, if the king should give the word, or the council give the word *under his authority*, the grandest scene would be exhibited, the world ever saw." "Hitherto," said Mr. Attwood, "our exertions have been confined in direct operation to this town and neighbourhood. Suppose, now, we should erect the standard of the Birmingham Union in London, that glorious standard which acts so terrifically upon his Grace the Duke of Buckingham, I can tell you, and I can tell his Grace, that if we should so act, nine-tenths of the whole population of that immense city, would instantly rally round the sacred emblem of their country's freedom ; the same would be the case in Newcastle, Manchester, Glasgow, and Dublin, the whole of the British people would answer to the call, wherever the standard of the Birmingham Union should be unfurled, under the sanction of the king and the law."

An address had already been presented, signed by three thousand householders in Wolverhampton, and another from Bilston, expressing their willingness to brave any perils, at the command of the council. "But the lords will not dare again to throw out the bill ; if they do," said Mr. Edmonds, "let them take lessons in dancing,

and have their duchesses instructed in washing, that they may have honest means of procuring their livelihoods when they get to the continent." For "I put it to you," said Mr. Attwood, "whether you would not rather die, than be the slaves of the boroughmongers;" the answer left no doubt of the intentions of the people. "Of what value," said one of the organs of the Tories, "are the threats of the people; if the Duke of Wellington's artillery waggon-drivers only were put in motion, they would drive the people of England before them with their stirrup leathers." "Would they," said the Times newspaper, "if the Duke of Wellington were insane enough to put foot in stirrup against the people of England, he would find it the toughest piece of work he ever cut out for himself; he and his partizans might boast, while putting their armour on, but truly their boast would be small, when they came to take it off." The Tories might taunt the people with cowardice, but, in moments of reflection, they bitterly regretted that their taunts bore not the semblance of truth. What! had those people who had heretofore brought the opponents of their liberty low, degenerated? had those people, who displayed a terrible example of their justice in the fate of Strafford, and Charles the First, so far lost the spirit of their forefathers, as to bend with pusillanimity and cowardice, before the petty obstructions now opposed to their wishes? No; the same spirit which animated their brave progenitors at Marston Moor, at Dunbar, and Worcester, still glowed within their breasts with primitive ardour, and that the darling of the Tories full well knew—he had seen them brave fire, the sword, and the terrible engines of slaughter. At Salamanca, Ciudad Roderigo, Vittoria, and Waterloo, the chosen veterans of a thousand victories, bowed before the stern courage of the British soldier; then, did the soldier's uniform act as a magic mantle, giving firmness to



hearts of fear, or was this amazing courage an ingredient in the British character, which no time could annihilate, no obstruction break?

“Our motto,” said Mr. Attwood, “in the peaceful and legal contest in which we are engaged, shall be that of the immortal Hampden’s, ‘*Vestigia nulla retrorsum*’ or, in plain English, ‘No retreat.’” “But,” said another speaker, “if we are to have Polignac, it shall be with Polignac’s fate.” “God forbid,” said Mr. Parkes, “that I should incite you to the last resort of a civil and physical contention for your liberties as Englishmen, for who can contemplate the channels of industry choked up in this vast ocean of manufacturing labour, without discerning that this generation would make a tremendous sacrifice for posterity. But I solemnly warn, I implore, the house of lords, not to force the reformers to a civil contest. If they do throw out the reform bill, one of two events must follow—more lords or none.” Towards the close of the meeting, Mr. Salt called upon the assembled multitudes to repeat after him, in the face of heaven, and in the presence of the God of justice and mercy, with deep and solemn determination, the following pledge: “In unbroken faith, through every peril, and trial, and privation, we devote ourselves and our children to our country’s cause.” It was an awful sight to see two hundred thousand brave men thus swear to meet the dark and perilous times apparently approaching. “My good friends,” said Mr. Attwood, with that devotional feeling which was always exposing “the milk of human kindness” which so eminently characterises him, “My good friends, before we depart, I will call upon you again to exhibit a spectacle of loyalty and devotion: our good King is entitled to the deepest gratitude of his people, I therefore desire that you will all of you take off your hats, and that you will lift up your eyes to heaven, where the just God rules over

heaven and earth, and that you will all of you cry out, with one heart and one voice, "God bless the King;" the united prayer arose to heaven, with a noise like the first clap of thunder.

The vast assemblage then began to leave the ground. The Unions of the neighbouring towns gathering their scattered members together, and arranging them beneath their banners. The bands belonging to each company playing lively and patriotic airs, and the whole crowd marshalling into procession, and joining the long line of the retiring multitude, that extending into beautiful array, at length melted into distance, far beyond the extremest point which could be reached by the strongest vision. The morning dawned upon the town of Birmingham without a single indication of the fact, that the largest and most important meeting ever held in England, had concentrated the united attention of two hundred thousand human beings on the previous day. Though the people were thus openly at work, their enemies were no less secretly determined to "improve" the bill. Earl Grey, unconscious of the mine which was about to spring beneath his feet, moved in a committee of the lords, the clause disfranchising all boroughs below the specified amount of population. Lord Lyndhurst moved, as an amendment, that the disfranchising clauses be deferred until the amount of enfranchisement was determined; the opposition fully unmasked their intentions by the unusual care they manifested to justify their proceedings, and the employment of many evidently ostensible arguments; their object was, by enfranchising the population of large towns, so far to reduce the popular fervour in favour of the bill, as to enable them to retain the same power over the commons, house as heretofore, by the retention of the rotten boroughs. But Earl Grey had staked too much of his fame on carrying the bill entire, and too clearly foresaw

that his party never could retain the reins of power, if the house of commons were not completely emancipated from the influence of the lords. Besides, the lords never would forgive him for this attempt to make the people's house free, and their own the "register office for the acts of the commons;" he therefore stood manfully forward in defence of his own motion, but found himself defeated, by a majority of thirty-five. As soon as the result of the division was known, he moved the adjournment of the house, and the opposition, by their great anxiety to "explain," betrayed an extreme fear of their own actions. The news of this division was carried with unexampled and surprising celerity, to all parts of the empire, nothing could exceed the bitter indignation with which it was universally received; if there were any glad of the information, they kept their joy concealed. In Birmingham, the population had long been anxiously waiting the arrival of the London coaches, and when they arrived, nothing could exceed the fierceness of feeling with which the intelligence they brought, was received; their passions were wound up to the highest pitch of unvented public rage, had it been the seat of government, it must have been a brave and a majestic force, which could have prevented a terrible revolution. Business immediately ceased, men's minds were unfitted for business; their passions so far disturbed the coolness of judgment, that they could not rationally think nor discourse on the subject which had disturbed their temper. In the middle of the night, an express arrived, with the still more unwelcome intelligence that the ministers had resigned, and the king had been pleased to accept their resignations. Until this moment, his majesty had been the most popular individual in the realm, had any one dared to impugn the uprightness of his proceedings, there were hundreds who would undertake his defence; but of a sudden, none were so unpopular.

By an early hour the next morning, the "King's head," (which had been the attractive sign of many a public house) was either entirely removed, or turned upside down, and the Queen's endured a more ignominious fate, as she was believed to have influenced the King against the rights and liberties of the people. As soon as the resignation of ministers became generally known, more dignified means were sought to manifest the popular displeasure; as early as eight o'clock, some thousands had assembled before the union rooms, cheering the different members of the council as they arrived. By ten o'clock, the whole of the council had assembled, and were in anxious deliberation; numbers of deputies were constantly arriving from various parts of the kingdom, to receive instructions how to act in their several districts. The crowds before the rooms rapidly increased; presently, a deafening shout arose, which was continued for some time. A paper was exhibited in a window in the neighbourhood, making the following announcement, "No taxes paid here until the reform bill is passed." A movement took place at the other end of the multitude, and a cheer burst forth, which was instantly answered by the whole crowd. Five hundred of the most wealthy inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood, walked in procession to the council room, with the following declaration; "We, the undersigned inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood of Birmingham, who have hitherto refrained from joining the Political Union, deem it our duty to our country at this awful crisis, to come forward and join that body, for the purpose of promoting the further union, order, and determination of all classes, in support of the common cause of parliamentary reform." Great numbers were daily signing this declaration. The cheering had not subsided, which attended the arrival of the subscribers to this document, ere a member of the council belonging to a



faith prevalent in the "sister island," appeared at the window, and shortly addressed the people. At the conclusion of his address, he said, "Fellow countrymen, be silent for awhile, the council are devising means to put the government into the hands of the people;" the cheering which burst forth at this announcement, was more loud and vehement than any which preceded it. The people still continued increasing, and it became necessary to adjourn to another place, or give some directions to cause the people to disperse; at twelve o'clock, the people were again addressed by one of the council; they were cautioned strictly to obey the laws, and not to give way to gloomy feelings upon the occasion; things certainly did not wear the most lovely aspect, still there was enough to assure the careful and thoughtful observer, that the present defeat was but the prelude to a certain and extensive victory. "Therefore it is requested that you will all go to your several homes for the present, and tell your brothers, your friends, and your neighbours, that a meeting will be held on Newhall Hill, at three o'clock, to take into consideration, what measures are to be adopted in this alarming crisis. Fellow countrymen, it is particularly requested that all the members of the Political Union, and all the friends of reform and of the liberties of their country, will wear a ribbon of the union jack sewn upon their breasts, and until the jack can be obtained, that they will wear a blue ribbon; and it is particularly desired, that it may not be taken off until the bill of reform is become law. Like brothers, come arm in arm, wearing a noble aspect as men going to an assured victory."

A number of carrier's waggons were immediately drawn to Newhall Hill, to form a temporary hustings. By two o'clock, the people again began to assemble, they came arm in arm, from ten to fifteen abreast, with the union jack or blue ribbon sewn on their breast. Only one medal

was seen among one hundred thousand people ; and that, as soon as the obnoxious legend " God save the King," was pointed out to the wearer, was thrown ignominiously away. The banners were immediately arranged for the procession, and that which had formerly borne the British lion rousing himself from slumber, was changed ; the lion was seen thoroughly roused, and springing forward to the inevitable destruction of his foes. The banners and people were soon marshalled in the order of procession ; the spectacle was far more imposing than that on Monday, it wore less of the appearance of a holiday exhibition, and seemed more like men determined to carry their point, or endure the extremity of human suffering. When the procession arrived at the hill, the rush to obtain places in the neighbourhood of the speakers, was terrific, and even upon the brow of the hill, far away from the speakers, the press was alarming. The speakers began to address the meeting, when the people universally inquired, " What are we to do ?" to " Observe the same peace, order, and legality, which has carried you triumphant through all your proceedings," was the answer. " Are we always to live upon this ?" was the rejoinder ; they were told that all legal means had not been tried, the power lodged in the commons' house had yet to be exerted ; " Let the house of commons refuse to pass the mutiny act, and instantly that prodigious army of brave soldiers now under the control of government, would drop into the ranks of the men of Birmingham." We shall obtain a more beneficial bill than the one now lost, " not by the use of arms, God forbid that such a course should be rendered necessary, but if the circumstances into which we are thrown, do render it necessary, if the tyrants by whom we are oppressed, compel us in self defence to war with such weapons, Englishmen will not hesitate to use them, to put down their enemies." " If the laws are broken for

the purpose of aiding the efforts of our enemies, the laws may be broken for the purpose of supporting and protecting the rights of the people." It was further said, that there was another mode of accomplishing the end in view; that was, for workmen to keep the money in their pockets, instead of paying it into the saving's bank. There was also a unanimous determination to pay no more taxes, until the bill was passed. "The new government," said Mr. Attwood "if a government be establised, may kidnap me, but thousands, I doubt not, will follow me to imprisonment, and it must be a large place that will hold us all." The king appeared to have deserted the place at the head of his people, which he had so long and so honourably maintained; the ministers were defeated, the lords had abated none of their opposition, the court was reported to be unrelentingly opposed to the people, and no where could they seek refuge in this hour of the country's danger, but in the house of commons. The following petition was therefore adopted, and signed by the chairman on behalf of the meeting.

The humble address and petition of the inhabitants of Birmingham, and the neighbourhood of Birmingham, assembled to the number of one hundred thousand persons, at Newhall Hill, this 10th day of May, 1832.

Sheweth,

That your petitioners have been struck with surprise and alarm, at the awful intelligence which has this day reached them, respecting the dissolution of his majesty's government at this perilous crisis, on account of their persevering in supporting the bill of reform, as twice passed by your honourable house.

That, under these unexpected and extraordinary circumstances, the life and property of no man in England is safe; and, that the only possible way of giving safety to all, is to pass the bill of reform, unmutilated into law.

That your petitioners, look upon your honourable house, as the only remaining stay which binds together the existing constitution of the country, and in the awful situation in which they find themselves and their country placed, they appeal to your honourable house, not to shrink from the great duties before you, but manfully and fearlessly to support the rights of the people, and to adopt whatever measures may be deemed necessary for the safety and liberty of the country.

That it is only by the manly and patriotic exercise of the great duties which the constitution has imposed upon your honourable house, that your petitioners can now see any hope that the just and sacred rights of Englishmen can be recovered in any way, except by means that will break up the fabric of society, and endanger the fortunes and lives of millions.

That your petitioners find it declared, in the Bill of Rights, that the people of England "may have arms for their defence, suitable to their condition, and as allowed by law;" and your petitioners apprehend that this great right will be put in force generally, and that the whole people of England will think it necessary to have arms for their defence, in order that they may be prepared for any circumstances that may arise.

Your petitioners, do therefore most earnestly pray, that your honourable house, will forthwith present an address to his majesty, beseeching his majesty not to allow the resignation of his ministers, but to allow them forthwith to create a number of peers, sufficient to insure the passing of the bill of reform, unmutated into law, and that your honourable house will instantly withhold all supplies, and adopt any other measures whatever, which may be necessary to carry the bill of reform, and to ensure the safety and the liberty of the country.

A deputation was immediately dispatched with this



petition, and to consult with the leaders in London, on the measures necessary to be adopted in this important crisis. But the house of commons again did their duty, and passed the following motion of Lord Ebrington's, in a very full house, by a majority of eighty—"That an humble address be presented to his majesty, humbly representing to his majesty the deep regret felt by this house, in the change which has been announced in his majesty's councils, by the retirement of those ministers in whom this house continues to repose unabated confidence. That this house, in conformity with the recommendation contained in his majesty's most gracious speech from the throne, has framed and sent up to the house of lords, a bill for the reform of the representation of the people, by which they are convinced, that the prerogatives of the crown, the authority of both houses of parliament, and the rights and liberties of the people are duly secured. That to the progress of this measure, the house of commons considers itself bound in duty to state, to his majesty, that his subjects are looking with the most intense interest and anxiety. And they cannot disguise from his majesty, that the taking of any step which would impair its efficiency, would be productive of great disappointment. That this house, is therefore impelled, by warm attachment to his majesty's person and throne, humbly, but most earnestly to implore his majesty, to call to his counsels such persons only as will carry into effect, unimpaired in all its essential provisions, that bill for the reform of the representation of the people, which has recently passed this house."

Though the blue flag floated in triumph from the highest pinnacles of the town, it was but a barren victory. It had hitherto been only a disastrous defeat. All things wore the most gloomy appearance. The funeral knell flung its solemn boom through the air. Man conversed with man, upon those passages in our history, when our brave fore-

fathers fought against their king, vanquished and beheaded him, and the dark struggle in which they were about to engage, was consecrated by the example of the heroes of the commonwealth. Though the calamities consequent upon a civil war were vividly before them, they scrupled not to prepare for its commencement. They were aware that their homes may have been razed to the earth, their daughters deflowered, and all the evils consequent upon the triumph of an infuriated soldiery might overtake them in the first burst of the storm. Yet the consciousness that their duty to themselves and their children required the sacrifice, nerved the heart for the contest, and bared the arm for the blow. Gloomy and portentous as all things appeared, it was some consolation to observe the unanimity with which the orders of the council were observed. The union jack was universally worn by the men. Buttons, brooches, and articles of jewellery were made and worn, containing the same emblem; and the ladies mingled the blue profusely in their dresses—thus manifesting the persons who partook of the general enthusiasm. But, it would be absurd to suppose, that all who did not wear the signal of the union were opposed to its objects. Some of the magistrates, and many of the bankers and merchants of the town signed a declaration, purporting, that though they did not join the union, they should do all within their power to pass the bill of reform, unmutilated into law. Every memento which reminded the inhabitants of their enemies was carefully removed. Wellington Street was changed to Attwood Street, but is now called Pershore Street; Eldon Place, Adelaide house, Cumberland Terrace, and a host of others, whose names were taken from the Tory nomenclature were torn away, and other names substituted of a more popular hue.

A report was in circulation that the Duke of Wellington

had been applied to for the purpose of forming an administration, upon the principle of carrying some measure of reform. One of his partizans made a speech in the house of commons, apparently with the intention of ascertaining its feeling on the subject; his reception was very discouraging; besides, the people had begun to assume an attitude of defiance. Thousands were secretly exercising themselves in the use of military weapons, in Birmingham, five thousand men were said to be armed and ready at a moment's notice, to put what little skill a few days' training had given them into use. The people became generally alarmed at the reported administration of the duke, and the council adopted the following declaration, which crowds immediately flocked to sign.

### SOLEMN DECLARATION.

*Birmingham, May 14, 1832.*

We, the undersigned, think it necessary, in this awful crisis of our country's fate, to make known to our fellow-countrymen, the alarm and horror with which we are impressed, by the report of the Duke of Wellington having been placed at the head of his majesty's councils. We entertain this alarm and horror on the following grounds.

*First,* The Duke of Wellington's general avowal of arbitrary principles.

*Secondly,* His speech against all reform, made only about a year and a half ago.

*Thirdly,* His protest against the reform bill, as entered on the journals of the house of lords, the 17th of April last.

*Fourthly,* His reported expressions in the late parliament, amounting to those of regret, that the Irish people "WOULD NOT" break the law.

*Fifthly,* His being a pensioner of foreign despots, and

as such exposed to their influence, and unfit to govern a free people.

*Sixthly*, His conduct to Marshal Ney, who was murdered by the Bourbon government, in violation of the convention of Paris; notwithstanding his appeal to the Duke of Wellington, who had signed that convention.

*Seventhly*, His general support of arbitrary power on the continent of Europe, and the certainty that his policy, if he be true to his principles, will necessarily involve the nation in unjust and ruinous wars against the liberties of Europe.

*Eighthly*, His utter incompetency to govern England by any other means than the sword, which has never yet been and never will be submitted to by the British people.

For these and various other reasons, we hereby solemnly declare our fixed determination to use all the means which the constitution and the law have placed at our disposal, to induce his majesty to reject from his councils that faction, at the head of which is the Duke of Wellington, who have, by their arbitrary principles, excited the distrust and abhorrence of the whole population of the United Kingdom; and we declare our firm conviction, that the public excitement and agitation can never be allayed until the great bill of reform shall be carried into law, by that administration, by whose wisdom and virtue it was first introduced.

These are our fixed and unalterable sentiments; and we hereby appeal to all our fellow-countrymen throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland, and we confidently call on them to unite with us and to sign this our solemn declaration, in support of the liberty and the happiness of our country."

During the whole of this and the next day, the most absurd rumours were afloat, the Tower of London was said to be prepared for three months seige; cannon and



ammunition were ordered from the various marine depots, to be conveyed to several large towns. Ten thousand soldiers from Weedon, were marching upon Birmingham, and stranger still, numbers of the Scotch Greys lying in the Birmingham barracks, had joined the Union. But there was a rumour bearing many appearances of truth, and believed by persons who generally had the best information, that a general rising of the inhabitants would take place on the 16th. Its object was only darkly insinuated, though when coolly and dispassionately considered, it must have been foreseen, that it would ruin, or at least endanger, the cause it was intended to support, no matter what was its object.

The eventful morning dawned, and by six o'clock the joyful news arrived, that Earl Grey had been recalled to his majesty's councils. The bells, which had been tolled and rung backwards, were immediately reversed and swung joyously, "changing their funeral to a festal song." The royal standard was hoisted on the steeple of St. Phillip's church, and St. Martin's was literally covered with flags. The clanging of the bells soon roused the inhabitants; the intelligence spread like an electrical thrill, "turning the thoughts of sorrow into tears of joy." The excitement was more extraordinary than any of the extraordinary' excitements which had agitated the public mind, and it was determined to give *eclat* to the victory by giving Mr. Attwood a triumphant reception into town.

Harbone, the village where Mr. Attwood resides, is four miles from Birmingham; as early as nine o'clock, the roads leading thereto were thronged with carriage company and pedestrians. About twenty thousand persons were waiting his arrival at the Five Ways gate. At length the joyful sounds of music gave notice of his approach, and the air was immediately rent by the vociferous cheers of

the people. The procession immediately moved forward down Islington, Holloway Head, and Smalbrook Street, where a clap of thunder burst above their heads, and by one of those strange perversions of natural phenomena of which history gives numerous examples, it was called an expression of approbation by heaven at the people's triumph. From thence, the procession moved along Edgemark Street, up High Street, along New Street, up Bennett's Hill, and down Newhall Street to Newhall Hill, where a temporary hustings had been erected. At the commencement of the meeting, there were forty thousand people on the ground, and at the conclusion, about sixty thousand.

Mr. Edmonds immediately came forward and said, "Fellow countrymen, I have the honour to propose that our noble chairman, who is this day crowned with eternal glory, do take the chair."

"My dear friends," said Mr. Attwood, "I feel so much gratitude to Almighty God, for the escape the nation has had from a most tremendous revolution, that I cannot help wishing that our reverend friend near me would publicly return thanks to our wise and beneficent Creator, for the success of our righteous cause." The Rev. Hugh Hutton, in a most impressive manner, offered up the following extemporaneous thanksgiving. "Oh Lord God Almighty, who orderest the affairs of all men, behold thy people before thee, with grateful and rejoicing hearts, looking up to thee as the Author of every blessing. We thank thee for the great deliverance thou hast wrought out for us, and the great and bloodless victory which thou hast conferred. We thank thee, the God of all blessings, for delivering us from the bonds of our oppressors, and the designs of designing and bloody-minded men. Imbue, we beseech thee, the hearts of all now assembled, with a spirit of Christian benevolence, so that in the hour of our

triumph, we may cheerfully forgive all our enemies and oppressors. Grant that we may so use and improve the great privileges thou hast conferred upon us, that we may secure them to us and our children, for thy glory, and for the benefit of the whole family of man. Accept, we beseech thee, the thanksgivings and petitions of thy humble creatures, and to thy name be ascribed all the glory. May thy blessing rest upon the proceedings of this day, and more especially on him called to preside at this glorious meeting of emancipated and exulting freemen. May the feeling of all hearts be more united in the glorious cause in which we have engaged, and, through thy blessing, enjoy a more abundant victory. Amen. Amen."

This prayer had a surprising effect upon the meeting; the stillness and solemnity which it created, remained so long upon the people, as to give them the appearance of tameness, now victory had crowned the cause which had engaged so much of their attention.

Mr. Edmonds, in remarking upon the courage, energy, and prudence, which characterised the whole proceedings of the chairman, and the victory over the boroughmongers which was the consequence, said, "A certain Grecian general, after the obtainment of a victory, was heard to say, 'What will my father say, when he hears of this?' Might not Mr. Attwood, in the same spirit of self-congratulation—at once creditable to the patriot and the man, exclaim, 'What will my father, my wife, and my children say to this?' for the victory was a greater one than any which had hitherto been recorded in the annals of the world.

The meeting hailed with gratitude the emancipation of his majesty from evil-minded counsellors, and acknowledged with the same feeling, the prompt and efficient support of the majority of the house of commons. It also returned

thanks to the lord mayor, the common council, and livery of the city of London, the citizens of Westminster, and the various political bodies who had made common cause with the people of Birmingham. An address of congratulation to Earl Grey was also adopted, and a deputation appointed to present the address to his lordship in person. In every town and village through which the deputation passed, the inhabitants came out to meet them, and the common council of London presented the freedom of the city to the chairman of the Union.

When Earl Grey was defeated on the disfranchising clauses, the Duke of Wellington undertook to form an administration, upon the expressed condition of carrying a large measure of reform, as his majesty would grant him the power upon no other conditions. He tried those persons who had formerly acted with him, but the most talented shrunk from the responsibility; others were tried with the like success. His grace ultimately found himself under the necessity of retiring. He went to inform his majesty of his want of success, and his majesty is reported to have asked, by what means he had intended to carry his bill through the lords, if it were as extensive as the people desired, as he could not grant him the power he had already refused Earl Grey, of "swamping the house of lords." His grace answered, by prevailing upon a part of their lordships to refrain from voting when the measure was before the house. "You cannot," said his majesty, "refuse then to adopt the same policy to Earl Grey, or I must give him power to create peers, to ensure the safety of the bill." The Lords Harrowby and Wharncliffe, and their partizans, adopted this policy, and neither attended or voted during the progress of the bill; its further discussions were therefore matters of course. But the taste the people had already had of the temper of the lords, caused them to watch their proceedings with jealousy



and anxiety. To prevent a repetition of the absurd rumours before noticed, a gentleman who had already done much to disseminate sound information upon abstruse subjects, supplied daily a number of papers to different persons, who, mounting some slight elevation, such as a tombstone, the Old Canal Office steps and other eminences, read them aloud to the crowds, who every evening flocked to hear them.

Upon the return of the deputation from London, it was determined to give them a triumphant reception into Birmingham, great preparations were made, and the day was very favourable. At Small Heath Gate, the deputation was met by a very large procession, with thousands of flags and banners, and numerous bands of music; the inhabitants of every house near which the procession passed, displayed some token of congratulation; flags, mottos, transparencies, effigies, garlands, and wreaths of flowers stretched across the streets, waving of handkerchiefs, and continued greetings met the eye and the ear at every step; the firing of guns, the ascent of balloons, and the pealing of bells from every steeple, added to the demonstrations of joy. But these tokens of joy were not removed, until some weeks after the reform bill had obtained the royal assent. Such numbers of flags were daily exhibited, that surprised every beholder. In Smallbrook Street, one hundred and thirteen were displayed. In Livery Street, three hundred and ten. In Great Charles Street, eighty-seven, and every other street in proportion. June 7th, 1832, the Bill of Reform became the law of the land, and it was determined to manifest the public joy, by a procession upon a more magnificent scale than any other which had hitherto taken place. But an awful and contagious disease was raging in the neighbourhood, particularly at Bilstone, eleven miles from hence, and two from Wolverhampton. At this place, several thousands were swept off

by this epidemic. Various physicians represented the danger of its introduction, by some of the numerous persons who would be attracted to Birmingham from the above neighbourhood. The council resolved in consequence to postpone the procession. But the various trades had made great preparations, and were chagrined at the disappointment. They were uninfluenced by the prudential advice which had influenced the council, and determined to have the procession on the day appointed, and conduct it themselves. Notwithstanding that it was discountenanced by the middle class generally, it was the grandest procession which ever took place in Birmingham.

At this point we purpose concluding the history of the Union: it is now, as before intimated, virtually dissolved; the council having discontinued its meetings, subject to be again called into activity by the requisition of its members.

As we have rarely deviated from strict narration in the preceding pages, we shall here briefly give some account of the causes which led to the extraordinary success of the association whose proceedings we have related.

*And first, the inherent justice of the cause they advocated.* It could not rationally be supposed that the people of England, who have been renowned so many centuries for their love of liberty, would long allow any faction to infuse such a spirit into the commons' house as would prevent its being what the constitution supposes it to be,—a faithful representation of the opinions of the people; nor is it consistent with reason that a part of the inhabitants of any country should be allowed the power to enforce their own interest, in opposition to the interests of society in general. The argument made use of by the Tories, who acknowledged the theoretical justice of the cause,—that the people were not generally in a fit state to exercise the

power which the constitution allowed, and that therefore a conservative principle was necessary to counteract a too popular influence, at once destroyed the principle they had already allowed ; for it is theoretically as well as practically false to allow an agent a power he is incapable of properly directing ; for instance, it is false in theory as well as practice to allow a man who has lost the right use of his faculties the unrestrained use of weapons of destruction which were his property when in a sane state ; nay, the law and justice is still more jealous, and denies an insane man the use of property which can injure none but his heir, by a lavish and prodigal diffusion. But if this argument, and it was the only one adduced, had any force before the struggle commenced, it must entirely have vanished before it ended, for never was a more peaceable and determined contest carried on against a small but powerful and persevering faction.

*The public mind had been prepared for the change.* For many years, men who were far before the times in which they lived, in general information, had laboured hard to diffuse a correct knowledge of the subject, and though their efforts were thanklessly received, and themselves either met by the withering coldness of former friends, the cunning machinations of the spy, or open prosecution, they were cheered by the countenances of some adherents, and the proud belief that they were martyrs in the cause of their country. By old men their opinions were received with repugnance, but the young men heard their discourses and pondered upon their arguments, which would naturally produce conviction. The full exposure of the horrid spy system enlisted the sympathies of all on behalf of the unfortunate men who were thus diabolically entrapped into crime ; and their subsequent prosecution rivetted the affection of every generous mind for the cause in which so many had suffered. The distress

which existed for some years preceding the formation of the union, caused all men, for all were sufferers, to entertain the subject of reform more ardently than at any former period; and the disgusting levity and insults of the commons, when the distress and petitions for reform were brought before them, had the natural effect of endearing the nation to the cause for which it had been ridiculed and insulted.

But the prudence of the council, far more than any other cause, carried reform to a triumphant issue. There were ardent minds among them who could scarcely be restrained by the dull cold forms of law from pushing illegally forward to redress those grievances which their reason, their feelings, their sufferings, informed them were founded upon the immutable principles of justice, but the eminent tact of the chairman, and the steadiness of the majority, prevented their ardour ruining the cause it was intended to serve. The opinions of eminent lawyers were obtained upon the constitution of the union, and the various measures which it was necessary to adopt, and if any measure of doubtful legality were adopted, immediately its doubtfulness was discovered, it was rescinded. The council were continually enforcing upon the people the necessity that peace, legality, and order, should characterise all their proceedings, and their directions were fully obeyed. The people were not without causes of irritation, they were spoken of disrespectfully, and their pretensions met with the same spirit as would be those of an inferior order of animals; but, however their generous spirits may have been insulted by the supporters of a fallen cause, they never allowed resentment to induce them to act as their enemies desired. Strict obedience to the laws was maintained throughout the struggle, and contempt repaid the insults of those who thought proper to display their magnanimity and good-breeding by despising the class from which they had so



recently sprung ; but the prudence of the council was not confined in its influences to its own neighbourhood, their proceedings were watched and imitated by all who had the same end in view, and produced a unity of purpose, which it was impossible ultimately to resist. Every city, town, and village, established similar societies, and thus rolled up and concentrated public opinion into masses which could be directed upon any point, at will, and it requires little penetration to perceive that no man, or set of men, can long withstand the unanimous call of the public voice. If the people be universally against them, the immediate circles of their daily intercourse award only a niggard and cautious praise, and themselves suspicious of their own approbation, no minds, stern and proud though they be, can long condemn the people they affect to despise ; a proud appeal to the verdict of posterity, will not avail, and at length, like a lonely tree on the heath, they must shrink before the storm, at which they long tossed their heads in disdain.

*The efforts of the king and his ministers.* Notwithstanding the spirit of democracy which is largely infused by education, into the minds of all Englishmen, there is still a great portion of devotional loyalty among his "majesty's liege subjects," which would prevent them taking any decisive measure in opposition to him, but would induce them to go any length with him, when supported by the popular voice. And on more than one occasion, his majesty manifested his determination to satisfy the wishes of his people, and rid himself and them from the domination of a few powerful families. His name was of eminent use in the contest, it was a tower of strength which they upon the adverse faction wanted, and induced a number of rich families to become the advocates of the cause they had long considered as that of the mob, and disgraceful to persons of their rank, to be its open or secret

friends. The very existence of the ministry, as such, demanded their utmost exertions; they entered office, pledged to carry a large measure of reform, and one sufficiently extensive, could not be carried but by opposing an overwhelming expression of public opinion, to the power possessed by a few families. Besides, the attempt of the Whig party in 1782, to govern the king and country by the union of family influence, had justly excited that suspicion, which the long period of Tory misrule had not erased from memory, and their own conduct since in office, has not eradicated. The altered state of society required such extensive changes in the policy of government, that so long as the power of family influence was uninjured, could not be effected; and the Whigs, who have other motives besides love of country for the retention of office, found it necessary to intrench themselves behind the power of the people, which could only be done by granting those reforms for which the people had long called but called in vain.

By these various causes, the greatest revolution recorded in the annals of any age or country, was peaceably effected. We have placed the exertions of the king and his ministers, among the auxiliary causes, but perhaps they ought to take a more dignified station; for without them, reform never could have been peaceably carried to a successful issue, and even those of the Union, great and powerful as they were, should be ranked as secondary causes.

## ELECTION.

THE Reform Bill having given two representatives to the borough of Birmingham, and two additional members for

the county, Birmingham will in future be occasionally subject to the bustle and excitement, if not the party spirit and disturbances generally displayed at elections. The county is now divided into two distinct districts, each of which sends its members independent of the other. Each division is divided into districts for polling; Birmingham is one of those districts, and the result of the last election, which was a contested one, shewed that the Birmingham electors for the northern division of the county, have a great proportion of votes, and also that they can behave as well, if not better than any town in England, under the influence of great excitement. The whole of the election proceedings passed over without the least disturbance.

Early in November, 1832, it became pretty generally rumoured, that two persons would be put in nomination, in opposition to Messrs. Attwood and Scholefield. This was followed by sundry meetings, private and public, among the friends of the opposition. It thus became necessary that the intended candidates should not be idle. A meeting was held, November 16th, 1832, at Beardsworth's Repository. This was followed by a canvass, which proved highly satisfactory to Mr. Attwood's friends. The day of nomination, December 12th, 1832, came, however, without the expected opposition, and this town was freed from the effects of a contested election for the first members sent for the new borough.

The hustings were erected in Moor Street, *Thomas Attwood*, Esq. was proposed by *Thomas Wright Hill*, and seconded by Mr. Betts. *Joshua Scholefield*, Esq. was proposed by *George Frederick Muntz*, Esq. and seconded by *Thomas Clark*, Esq. After a show of hands, they were declared duly elected by the returning officers, the high and low bailiffs. Great preparations were made for the chairing.

A car of exquisite workmanship was made at the expense of sixty guineas.

Early in the morning of December 17th all was bustle and preparation to honour our first representatives. The procession started from the Five Ways, Edgbaston. All the means of the Union to make a display, with very considerable additions got up for the occasion, were brought into use. The day was fine, and every street through which the procession passed, was one complete mass of human beings. Business was completely suspended. The greatest order prevailed, and no accidents occurred. More than sixty thousand persons were supposed to have been in New Street at one time.

G. De B. Attwood was proposed a candidate for the new borough of Walsall, in opposition to Mr. Foster. Although Mr. Attwood was the favourite, Foster was returned by a majority of sixty.

The votes of our members, with very few exceptions, have given entire satisfaction. This is sufficiently exemplified by the dinner given them at Beardsworth's Repository, Monday, September 15th, 1834, which was attended by at least four thousand persons. Nearly three thousand eight hundred sat down to dinner, and great numbers were disappointed at not being able to gain admission. As the dinner held in this place in October, 1831, has been minutely described, it would be useless to say much here, except we may add that the arrangements were similar, but better than on that occasion. The meeting was more numerously attended, and quite as respectable. The members were well received, and entered into long explanations of their parliamentary conduct. They cleared up some points that had been falsely reported, and the meeting broke up in good order.



## TRADE.

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PERHAPS there is not by nature, so much difference in the capacities of men, as by education. The efforts of nature will produce a tenfold crop in the field, but those of art, fifty.

Perhaps too, the seeds of every virtue, vice, inclination, and habit, are sown in the breast of every human being, though not in an equal degree. Some of these lie dormant for ever, no hand inviting their cultivation. Some are called into existence by their own internal strength, and others by the external powers that surround them. Some of these seeds flourish more, some less, according to the aptness of the soil, and the modes of assistance. We are not to suppose infancy the only time in which these scions spring, no part of life is exempt. I knew a man who lived to the age of forty, totally regardless of music. A fiddler happened to have apartments near his abode, attracted his ear, by frequent exhibitions, which produced a growing inclination for that favourite science, and he became a proficient himself. Thus, in advanced periods, a man may fall in love with a science, a woman, or a bottle: thus avarice is said to shoot up in ancient soil; and thus, I myself bud forth in history at fifty-six.

Theameleon is said to receive a tincture from the colour of the object that is nearest him; but the human mind in reality receives a bias from its connexions. Link a man to the pulpit, and he cannot proceed to any great lengths in profligate life. Enter him into the army, and

he will endeavour to swear himself into consequence. Make the man of humanity an overseer of the poor, and he will quickly find the tender feelings of commiseration hardened. Make him a surgeon, and he will amputate a leg with the same indifference with which a cutler saws a piece of bone for a knife handle. Make him a physician, and he will be the only person upon the premises, the heir excepted, unconcerned at the prospect of death. You commit a rascal to prison because he merits transportation, but by the time he comes out he merits a halter. By uniting also with industry, we become industrious. It is easy to give instances of people whose distinguishing characteristic was idleness, but when they breathed the air of Birmingham, diligence became the predominant feature. The view of profit, like the view of corn to the hungry horse, excites to action. Thus the various seeds scattered by nature into the soul at its first formation, either lie neglected, are urged into increase by their own powers, or are drawn towards maturity by the concurring circumstances that attend them.

The late Mr. Grenville observed, in the house of commons, "That commerce tended to corrupt the morals of a people." If we examine the expression, we shall find it true in a certain degree, beyond which, it tends to improve them.

Perhaps every tradesman can furnish out numberless instances of small deceit. His conduct is marked with a littleness, which though allowed by general consent, is not strictly just. A person with whom I have long been connected in business, asked, if I had dealt with his relation, whom he had brought up, and who had lately entered into commercial life. I answer in the affirmative. He replied, "He is a very honest fellow." I told him I saw all the finesse of a tradesman about him. "Oh, rejoined my friend, a man has a right to say all he can in favour of his

own goods." Nor is the seller alone culpable. The buyer takes an equal share in the deception. Though neither of them speak their sentiments, they well understand each other. Whilst a treaty is agitating, the profit of the tradesman vanishes yet the buyer pronounces against the article; but when finished, the seller whispers his friend, "It is well sold," and the buyer smiles it a bargain. Thus is the commercial track a line of minute deceits.

But, on the other hand, it does not seem possible for a man in trade to pass this line, without wrecking his reputation; which, if once broken, can never be made whole. The character of a tradesman is valuable, it is his all; therefore, whatever seeds of the vicious kind shoot forth in the mind, are carefully watched and nipped in the bud, that they may never blossom into action.

Having stated the accounts between morality and trade, I shall leave the reader to draw the balance, and only ask, "Whether the people in trade are more corrupt than those out? If the curious reader will lend an attentive ear to a pair of farmers in the market, bartering for a cow, he will find as much dissimulation as at St. James', or at any other Saint's but couched in homelier phrase. The man of well-bred deceit, is "*infinitely* your friend—it would give him *immense* pleasure to serve you!" while the man in the frock "Will be —— if he tells you a word of a lie!" Deception is an innate principle of the human heart, not peculiar to one man, or one profession. Having occasion for a horse, in 1759, I mentioned it to an acquaintance, and informed him the uses: he assured me he had one that would exactly suit; which he shewed in the stable, and held the candle pretty high, *for fear of affecting the straw*. I told him it was needless to examine him, for I should rely upon his word, being conscious he was too much my friend to deceive me; therefore bargained, and caused him to be sent home. But by the light of the sun,

which next morning illumined the heavens, I perceived the horse was *greased* on all fours. I therefore, in gentle terms, upbraided my friend with duplicity, when he replied with some warmth, "I would cheat my own brother in a horse." Had this honourable friend stood a chance of selling me a horse once a week, his own interest would have prevented him from deceiving me.

A man enters into business with a view of acquiring a fortune—a laudable motive! That property which rises from honest industry, is an honour to its owner; the repose of his age, the reward of a life of attention; but, great as the advantage seems, yet, being of a private nature, it is one of the least in the mercantile walk. For the intercourse occasioned by traffic, gives a man a view of the world, of himself; removes the narrow limits that confine his judgment, expands the mind, opens his understanding, removes his prejudices, and polishes his manners. Civility and humanity are ever the companions of trade; the man of business is the man of liberal sentiment; a barbarous and commercial people, is a contradiction; if he is not the philosopher of nature, he is the friend of his country. Even the men of inferior life among us, whose occupations, one would think, tend to produce minds as callous as the metal they work, lay a stronger claim to civilization than in any other place with which I am acquainted. I am sorry to mutilate the compliment, when I mention the lower race of the other sex.

It is singular, that a predilection for Birmingham, is entertained by every denomination of visitants, from Edward Duke of York, who saw us in 1765, down to the presuming quack, who, griped with necessity, boldly discharges his filth from the stage. A pavier, of the name of Obrian, assured me in 1750, that he only meant to sleep one night in Birmingham, in his way from London to Dublin. But instead of pursuing his journey next



morning, as intended, he had continued in the place thirty-five years: and though fortune had never elevated him above the pebbles of the street, he had never repented his stay.

It has already been remarked, that I first saw Birmingham in 1741, accidentally cast into those regions of civility, equally unknown to every inhabitant, nor had the least idea of becoming one myself. Though the reflections of an untaught youth of seventeen cannot be striking, yet, as they were purely natural, permit me to describe them.

I had been before acquainted with two or three principal towns. The environs of all I had seen were composed of wretched dwellings, replete with dirt and poverty; but the buildings in the exterior of Birmingham, rose in a style of elegance. Thatch, so plentiful in other towns, was not to be met with in this. I was much surprised at the place, but more at the people. They were a species I had never seen; they possessed a vivacity I had never beheld: I had been among dreamers, but now I saw men awake: their very step along the street shewed alacrity. I had been taught to consider the whole twenty-four hours as appropriated for sleep, but I found a people satisfied with only half that number. My intended stay, like Obrian's, was one night; but, struck with the place, I was unwilling to leave it. I could not avoid remarking, that if the people of Birmingham did not suffer themselves to *sleep in the streets*, they did not suffer others to sleep in their beds; for I was, each morning by three o'clock, saluted with a circle of hammers. Every man seemed to know and prosecute his own affairs: the town was large, and full of inhabitants, and those inhabitants full of industry. I had seen faces elsewhere tintured with an idle gloom void of meaning, but here, with a pleasing alertness. Their appearance was strongly marked with the

modes of civil life: I mixed with a variety of company, chiefly of the lower ranks, and rather as a silent spectator. I was treated with an easy freedom by all, and with marks of favour by some. Hospitality seemed to claim this happy people for her own, though I knew not from what cause. I did not meet with this treatment in 1770, twenty-nine years after, at Bosworth, where I accompanied a gentleman, with no other intent, than to view the field celebrated for the fall of Richard the Third. The inhabitants enjoyed the cruel satisfaction of setting their dogs at us in the street, merely because we were strangers. Human figures, not their own, are seldom seen in those inhospitable regions. Surrounded with impassable roads, having no intercourse with man to humanize the mind, no commerce to smooth their rugged manners, they continue the boors of nature.

Thus it appears, that characters are influenced by profession. That the great advantage of private fortune, and the greater to society, of softening and forming the mind, are the result of trade. But these are not the only benefits that flow from this desirable spring. It opens the hand of charity to the assistance of distress; witness the hospital and the two charity schools, supported by annual donation. It adds to the national security, by supplying the taxes for internal use, and, for the prosecution of war. It adds to that security, by furnishing the inhabitants with riches, which they are ever anxious to preserve, even at the risk of their lives; for the preservation of private wealth, tends to the preservation of the state. It augments the value of landed property, by multiplying the number of purchasers. It produces money to improve that land into a higher state of cultivation, which ultimately redounds to general benefit, by affording plenty. It unites bodies of men in social compact, for their mutual interest: it adds to the credit and pleasure

of individuals, by enabling them to purchase entertainment and improvement, both of the corporeal and intellectual kind. It finds employment for the hand that would otherwise be found in mischief; and it elevates the character of a nation in the scale of government.

Birmingham, by her commercial consequence, has, of late, justly assumed the liberty of nominating one of the representatives for the county; and, to her honour, the elective body never regretted her choice. In that memorable contest of 1774, we were almost to a man of one mind; if an *odd dozen* amongst us, of a different *mould*, did not assimilate with the rest, they were treated, as men of free judgment should ever be treated, *with civility*, and the line of harmony was not broken. If this little treatise happens to travel into some corporate places, where the fire of contention, blown by the breath of party, is kept alive during seven years, let them cast a second glance over the above remark.

Some of the first words after the creation, *increase and multiply*, are applicable to Birmingham; but as her own people are insufficient for the manufactures, she demands assistance for two or three miles round her. In our early morning walks, on every road proceeding from the town, we meet the sons of diligence returning to business, and bringing *in* the same dusky smuts, which the evening before they took out. But though they appear of a darkish complexion, we may consider it is the property of every metal to sully the user; money itself has the same effect, and yet he deems it no disgrace who is daubed by fingering it; the disgrace lies with him who has none to finger. Fashions mark all the degrees of men. This industrious race are distinguished by a black beard on Saturday night, and a white shirt on Monday morning.

The profits arising from labour, to the lower orders of men, seem to surpass those of other mercantile places.

This is not only visible in the manufactures peculiar to Birmingham, but in the more common occupations of the barber, tailor, shoemaker, &c. who bask in the rays of plenty.

It is entertaining to the curious observer, to contemplate the variation of things. We know of nothing, either in the natural or moral world, that continues in the same state. From a number of instances that might be adduced, permit me to name one—that of money. This, considered in the abstract, is of little or no value: but, by the common consent of mankind, is erected into a general arbitrator, to fix a value upon all others; a medium through which every thing passes; a balance by which they must be weighed; a touchstone to which they must be applied to find their worth; though we can neither eat nor drink it, we can neither eat nor drink without it. He that has none best knows its use.

It has long been a complaint, that the same quantity of this medium, money, will not produce so much of the necessaries of life, particularly food, as heretofore; or in other words, that provisions have been rising gradually for many ages, and that the shilling, which formerly supported the laborious family a whole week, will not now support it one day.

In times of remarkable scarcity, such as those in 1728, 1741, 1756, 1766, and 1774, the press abounded with publications on the subject; but none, which I have seen, reached the question, though short.

It is of no consequence, whether a bushel of corn sells for *sixpence* or *six shillings*, but what *time* a man must labour before he can earn one? If, by the moderate labour of thirty-six hours, in the reign of Henry the III., he could acquire a groat, which would purchase a bushel of wheat; and if, in the reign of George the III., he works the same number of hours for eight shillings, which will make the same



purchase, the balance is exactly even. If, by our commercial concerns with the eastern and the western worlds, the kingdom abounds with bullion, money must be cheaper ; therefore a larger quantity is required to perform the same use. If money would go now as far as in the days of Henry the III., a journeyman in Birmingham might amass a ministerial fortune.

Whether provisions abound more or less ? And, whether the poor fare better or worse, in one period than the other ? are also questions dependent upon trade, and therefore worth investigating.

If the necessaries of life abound more in this reign, than in that of Henry the III., we cannot pronounce them dearer. Perhaps it will not be absurd to suppose, that the same quantity of land, directed by the superior hand of cultivation, in the eighteenth century, will yield twice the produce, as by the ignorant management of the thirteenth. We may suppose also, by the vast number of new inclosures which have annually taken place since the revolution, that twice the quantity of land is brought into cultivation : it follows, that four times the quantity of provisions is raised from the earth, that was raised under Henry the III., which will leave a large surplus in hand, after we have deducted for additional luxury, a greater number of consumers, and for exportation. This extraordinary stock is a security against famine, which our forefathers severely felt. It will be granted, that in both periods the worst of the meat was used by the poor. By the improvements in agriculture, the art of feeding cattle is well understood, and much in practice ; as the land improves, so will the beast that feeds upon it : if the productions, therefore, of the slaughter-house, in this age, surpass those of Henry III., then the fare of the poor is at least as much superior now, as the worst of fat meat is superior to the worst of lean. The poor inhabitants in that day, found it difficult

to procure bread ; but in this, they sometimes add cream and butter.

Thus it appears, that through the amazing variation of things a balance is preserved : that provisions have not advanced in price, but are more plentiful ; and that the lower class of men have found in trade, that intricate, but beneficial clue, which guides them into the confines of luxury.

Provisions and the manufactures, like a pair of scales, will not preponderate together ; but as weight is applied to the one, the other will advance. As labour is irksome to the body, a man will perform no more of it than necessity obliges him ; it follows, that in those times when plenty preponderates, the manufactures tend to decay : for if a man can support his family with three days labour, he will not work six.

As the generality of men will perform no more work that produces a maintenance, reduce that maintenance to half the price, and they will perform but half the work : hence, half the commerce of a nation is destroyed at one blow, and what is lost by one kingdom will be recovered by another, in rivalship. A commercial people, therefore, will endeavour to keep provisions at a superior rate, yet within reach of the poor. It follows also, that luxury is no way detrimental to trade ; for we frequently observe ability and industry exerted to support it.

The practice of the Birmingham manufacturer for, perhaps, a hundred generations, was to keep within the warmth of his own forge. The foreign customer, therefore, applied to him for the execution of orders, and regularly made his appearance twice a-year ; and though this mode of business is not totally extinguished, yet a very different one is adopted. The merchant stands at the head of the manufacturer, purchases his produce, and travels the whole island to promote the sale ; a practice

that would have astonished our forefathers. The commercial spirit of the age, has penetrated beyond the confines of Britain, and explored the whole continent of Europe; nor does it stop there, for the West Indies, and the American world, are intimately acquainted with the Birmingham merchant; and nothing but the exclusive command of the East India Company over the Asiatic trade, prevents our riders from treading upon the heels of each other in the streets of Calcutta. To this modern conduct of Birmingham, in sending her sons to the foreign market, I ascribe the chief cause of her rapid increase.

By the poor's books it appears, there are not (1795) four thousand houses in Birmingham, that pay the parochial rates; whilst there are more than seven thousand that do not. Hence we see what an amazing number of the laborious part of mankind are among us. This valuable class of the creation, are the prop of the remainder. They are the rise and support of our commerce. From this fountain we draw our luxuries and our pleasures. They spread our tables, and oil the wheels of our carriages. They are the riches and the defence of the country. How necessary then is it to direct with prudence, the rough passions of this important race, and make them subservient to the great end of civil society. Let not the religious reader be surprised if I say, their follies, and even their vices, under certain restrictions, are beneficial. Corruption in the community, as well as in the natural body, accelerates vital existence. Let us survey the man, who begins life at the lowest ebb, without property, or any other advantage but that of his own prudence. He comes, by length of time and very minute degrees, from being directed himself, to have the direction of others. He quits the precincts of servitude, and enters the dominions of command. He laboured for others, but now others labour for him. Should the whole race, therefore, possess the same prudence, they

would all become masters. Where then could be found the servant? Who is to perform the manual part? Who is to execute the orders of the merchant? A world consisting only of masters, is like a monster consisting only of a head. We know that the head is no [more than the leading power, the members are equally necessary. And, as one member is placed in a more elevated state than another, so are the ranks of men, that no void may be left. The hands and the feet were designed to execute the drudgery of life, the head for direction, and all are suitable in their sphere.

∴ If we turn the other side of the picture, we shall see a man born in affluence, take the reins of direction, but like Phaeton, not being able to guide them, blunders on from mischief to mischief, till he involves himself in destruction, comes prone to the earth, and many are injured with his fall. From directing the bridle, he submits to the bit; seeks for bread in the shops, the line designed him by nature; where his hands become callous with the file, and where, for the first time in his life, he becomes useful to an injured society. Thus, from imprudence, folly, and vice, is produced poverty;—poverty produces labour; from labour, arise the manufactures; and from these, the riches of a country, with all their train of benefits.

Capacity is not quite so necessary to carry on business, as a turn of mind suited to the occasion. Most trades may be conducted with very little brains. I have known many a pretty fortune acquired by many a weak head; nay, I have sometimes been tempted to question, whether genius is not an enemy to success. It is apt to soar above the low grovellings of a mechanical shop. The man of genius may acquire fame, but the plodder acquires money.

We have a middle class, which is one of the most amiable characters among us; a character very little noticed, but very common—that of a *faithful servant*. A



flower is not the less beautiful, because it blows unheeded in the field, or a gem the less valuable, because never exhibited to the world. In them, the eye of attention wakes for another ; the still tides of ambition never disturb the mounds of contentment. I could give a list of these silent worthies, as long as of our chief officers. He who finds one, finds hidden treasures.

It would be difficult to enumerate the great variety of trades practised in Birmingham, neither would it give pleasure to the reader. Some of them spring up with the expedition of a blade of grass, and, like that, wither in a summer. If some are lasting, like the sun, others seem to change with the moon. Invention is ever at work. Idleness, the manufactory of scandal, with the numerous occupations connected with the cotton, the linen, the silk, and the woollen trades, are little known among us.

Birmingham began with the productions of the anvil, and probably will end with them. The sons of the hammer were once her chief inhabitants ; but the great crowd of artists is now lost in a greater : genius seems to increase with multitude. Part of the riches, extension, and improvement of Birmingham, are owing to the late John Taylor, Esq., who possessed the singular powers of perceiving things as they really were. The spring, and consequence of action, were open to his view ; him we may justly deem the Shakspeare or the Newton of his day. He rose from minute beginnings, to shine in the commercial hemisphere, as they in the poetical and philosophical. Imitation is part of the human character. An example of such eminence in himself, promoted exertion in others ; which, when prudence guided the helm, led on to fortune ; but the bold adventurer who crowded sail, without ballast and without rudder, has been known to upset the vessel, and sink insolvent. To this uncommon genius we owe the gilt button, the japanned and gilt snuff-boxes, with the

numerous race of enamels. From the same fountain issued the painted snuff-box, at which one servant earned £3 10s. per week, by painting them at a farthing each. In his shop were weekly manufactured, buttons to the amount of £800, exclusive of other valuable productions. One of the present nobility, of distinguished taste, examining the works, with the master, purchased some of the articles, among others, a toy of eighty guineas value, and, while paying for them, observed, with a smile, "he plainly saw he could not reside in Birmingham for less than two hundred pounds a day."—Mr. Taylor died in 1775, at the age of sixty-four, after acquiring a fortune of £200,000.

The active powers of genius, the instigation of profit, and the affinity of one calling to another, often induce the artist to change his occupation. There is nothing more common among us; even the divine and the lawyer are prone to this change. Thus the church throws her *dead weight* into the scale of commerce, and the law gives up *the cause of contention*: but there is nothing more disgraceful, next to thieving, in other places. "I am told," says an elderly gentleman, as he amused himself in a pitiful bookseller's shop in a wretched market town, "that you are a stocking-maker by trade!" The humble bookseller, half confused, and wholly ashamed, could not deny the charge. "Ah," cried the senior, whose features were modelled between the sneer and the smile, "there is neither honour or profit in changing the trade you were bred to. Do not attempt to sell books, but stay at home, and pursue your own business." But the dejected bookseller, (our author Mr. Hutton,) scarcely one step higher than a *walking stationer*, had acquired in 1795, a fortune of £20,000. Had he followed the senior's advice, he might, like a common foot soldier, have starved upon eightpence a day.

The toy trades first made their appearance in Birmingham, in the beginning of Charles the II. reign, in an

amazing variety, attended with all their beauties and their graces. The first in pre-eminence, is the

*Button.*

This beautiful ornament appears with infinite variation ; and though the original date is rather uncertain, yet we well remember the long coats of our grandfathers covered with half a gross of high-tops, and the cloaks of our grandmothers ornamented with a horn button nearly the size of a crown piece, a watch, or John-apple, curiously wrought, as having passed through the Birmingham press.

Though the common round button keeps on with the steady pace of the day, yet we sometimes see the oval, the square, the pea, and the pyramid, flash into existence. In some branches of traffic the wearer calls loudly for new fashions ; but in this, the fashions tread upon each other and crowd upon the wearer. The consumption of this article is astonishing, and the value, from threepence a gross, to one hundred and forty guineas. There seems to be hidden treasures couched within this magic circle, known only to a few, who extract prodigious fortunes out of this useful toy, whilst a far greater number submit to the statute of bankruptcy. Trade is like a restive horse, can rarely be managed ; for where one is carried to the end of a successful journey, many are thrown off by the way.

Buttons are made from a great variety of materials, and in a great variety of forms. *Glass, horn, bone, pearl, iron, brass, hard whites*, being a mixture of zinc with a small quantity of copper ; *gilding metal*, composed of a great proportion of the best copper, and a small quantity of zinc. The above kinds comprise about sixty different trades or branches. The glass button is not much consumed in England, but forms an article of exportation ; they are made in various shapes and colours. Considerable

quantities are made with tinsel or foil of various colours, placed at the back of white plate glass, which gives them the appearance of coloured glass; they are then set in a light brass frame, simeloed, plated, or gilt, previously prepared with shank, &c. Horn and bone buttons are manufactured both for home and foreign consumption, in great abundance. Pearl buttons, too, are made by thousands of grosses; and iron, by tens of thousands. The latter are cast with shanks, and with four holes, in imitation of bone. They neither require or receive much attention after they leave the mould in which they are cast. They are annealed, and a little of the rough taken off; put into a cylindrical box, and by this means made to smooth each other: they are then sent to the japanner, who gives them a coat of black varnish, and they are ready for sale. One man, with the assistance of two boys, will cast from four to five hundred dozens per day. Brass and hard whites are also made in great quantities; they are cast, the shanks are laid in the moulds, and the metal fastens round them; they are then turned and polished. A great variety are made of brass stamped; the shanks are soldered on, and the face, both in size, form, and device, is carried to an almost endless extent. The press produces another class, some of which are of a globular shape, but quite as numerous, if not more so, than the former, in its variations. They are gilt, plated, or simeloed.

The plain gilt button did formerly employ a great number of hands, but it has not been in general use for some years, having been superseded by the Florentine. This, like the former, is divided into several distinct branches; workmen in the best line receive good wages, but find less employment than formerly; a great number of boys and females, are employed in the various operations of button-making.

Plated buttons are either made from copper, plated with



silver, or are washed with silver, previous to burnishing. Simeloing is performed in a very simple manner, similar to gilding, but zinc is used instead of gold. Buttons, when nicely simeloed, burnished, and laquered, can scarcely be distinguished from a common gilt by persons connected with the trade, and they will wear nearly as long.

The manufacture of button shanks forms quite a distinct trade. They were originally made by hand, afterwards cast, but are now almost exclusively made by machinery. A few are still cast, and some made by hand, for very particular sorts of buttons. Mr. R. Heaton invented, and brought to the present state of perfection, machinery to make button shanks. The machine forms at once the shank ready for the button. There are three places in Birmingham where they are made—the principal one is Heaton, Brothers, of Shadwell Street, sons of the inventor, where from thirty to forty tons weight are made annually. The largest are eight gross to the pound; the smallest forty gross to the pound. About eighty thousand can be made per hour. Some idea may be formed of the extent of the button trade, when I say, that upwards of six hundred millions of button shanks are made in Birmingham annually. The prices of gilt buttons vary, according to the quantity of gold used in the process, as little difference can be made in the quality or weight of the metal. Many improvements, that affect both the health of the operator and the profits of the master, have been introduced into this trade, within the last twenty years, particularly in the gilding department. The quicksilver is carefully condensed and collected, instead of being suffered to fly off, in vapour, as formerly, to the great injury of the workman and loss to the master.

The dirt is carefully collected in every department and undergoes the process of refining. The trade of refining of shop-sweep was little known among us till within the last

fifty years. When *one* refiner only existed, he kept the profits of his trade pretty snugly to himself; he used to visit the manufactory, take away the sweep, and give the men a treat at Christmas. Another refiner crept into the secret and began business. They therefore vied with each other which should give the best treat. This lasted but for a short time, the master stepped in, seized the bone of contention, took an estimate from each of its value, and pocketed the proceeds. Shop-dirt, that used to be sent to fill up holes, and make good the roads, is now sold for ten shillings the cart-load, to two shillings and sixpence the pound. Mr. Taylor is said to have sold his shop-dirt for £1000 per annum.

There are now only three refiners of shop-sweep in Birmingham, and I know of only one other place in the kingdom where this art is understood, and that is Sheffield. Large quantities are annually brought to Birmingham, from all parts of the world, to be analyzed. These remarks are equally applicable to all trades, where the metals are used, from the brass-founder to the goldsmith. The next that calls our attention is the

### *Buckle.*

Perhaps the shoe, in one form or other, is nearly as ancient as the foot. It originally appeared under the name of sandal; this was no other than a sole without an upper leather. That fashion has since been inverted, and we now, sometimes, see an upper-leather nearly without a sole. But, whatever was the cut of the shoe, it always demanded a fastening. Under the house of Plantagenet, it shot horizontally from the foot, like a Dutch skate, to an enormous length, so that the extremity was fastened to the knee, sometimes with a silver chain, a silk lace, or even a packthread string, rather than avoid *genteel taste*.

This thriving beak, drew the attention of the legislature, who were determined to prune the exorbitant shoot; for, in 1465, we find an order of council, prohibiting the growth of the shoe toe, to more than two inches, under the penalty of a dreadful curse from the priest, and, which was worse, the payment of twenty shillings to the king.

This fashion, like every other, gave way to time, and in its stead, the rose began to bud upon the foot. Which, under the house of Tudor, opened in great perfection. No shoe was fashionable, without being fastened with a full blown rose. Ribbons of every colour, except white, the emblem of the depressed house of York, were had in esteem; but the red, like the house of Lancaster, held the pre-eminence. Under the house of Stuart, the rose withered, which gave rise to the shoe-string. The beaux of that age, ornamented their lower tier with double laces of silk, tagged with silver, and the extremities were beautified with a small fringe of the same metal. The inferior class, wore laces of plain silk, linen, or even a thong of leather; which last is yet to be met with in the humble plains of rural life. But I am inclined to think, the artists of Birmingham had no great hand in fitting out the beau of the last century.

The revolution was remarkable for the introduction of William, of liberty, and the minute buckle, not differing much in size and shape from the horse bean.

This offspring of fancy, like the clouds, is ever changing. The fashion of to-day is thrown into the casting-pot to-morrow.

The buckle seems to have undergone every figure, size, and shape of geometrical invention; it has passed through every form in the whole zodiac of Euclid. The large square buckle, plated with silver, is the *ton* of the present day. The ladies also, have adopted the reigning taste:

it is difficult to discover their beautiful little feet, covered with an enormous shield of buckle ; and we wonder to see the active motive under the massy load. Thus the British fair support the manufactures of Birmingham, and thus they kill by weight of metal.

In the Birmingham Chronicle, February 14, 1824, a concise account of the rapid advance of this article of taste and of commerce, and of its equally rapid decay and annihilation, was given by Mr. James Luckcock, who having been himself some years in the trade, may be admitted to be correct in his information. About the year 1778 an impulse was given to the article which had hitherto been stationary, by the introduction of an entirely new mode of plating, that of casting the buckle upon the silver, in moulds prepared for the purpose, and the substance consisted of tin, with the addition of such other metals as should give it greater hardness and durability. The facility of working this preparation, and the uncommon beauty which was thereby attained, soon extended the trade infinitely beyond its former limits ; so as that about the year 1788 there were not fewer than from four to five thousand pairs of hands employed in the town and neighbouring districts, in this article, which seemed to bid defiance to any change of fashion or caprice, to remove it from being one of our most staple articles of employment and profit. Fashion was wonderfully active, and its extremes, no doubt, operated to produce its own destruction. The Spanish buckle, long and narrow, was enlarged to such a size, as in some instances, to require a pad to prevent it touching the ground on each side of the instep. The Italian taste covered the foot from the instep to the toes, in a beautiful oval or octagon form, while the English style was generally oblong, about four inches by three, for men's size, and proportionally smaller for the ladies. Much ingenuity was displayed in the



different inventions of the chapes, which for the large sizes, were so contrived that the shoe should first be buckled by the small strap belonging to it, and then a large false one should be attached to the double chape, so as to cover the whole.

To any young person of the present day, the size and elegance of some of these extremes, would appear incredible, and more especially in connection with the low rate at which they were manufactured and sold. Some of the largest of them, plated on iron frames, stamped into rich patterns, with scalloped edges, innumerable piercings, the whole surface repaired and beautified by the hand of the chaser, and covered with silver as rich and white to the eye, as if the whole substance had been of that material, with large, highly dressed and blued double chapes—and the wholesale price to come within the compass of half-a-crown a pair. And again, these same patterns by being fine cast, (so as to require neither stamping nor dressing on the tops,) and silvered, were turned out most beautiful to the eye, at about one shilling a pair; but were only the wear of a day, being shorn of their beauty, if but for once splashed with dirt.

On the other hand, many were made of extravagant value. The jeweller, the silversmith, with the steel worker, the ornamental workman with his gilding, his spangles, and his various ornaments, seemed to vie with each other, who should produce the most tempting article to the man of fashion or of wealth. Steel buckles being considerably in demand, as high as twenty to thirty shillings a pair.

For about ten years, the trade was in its prime, and the ten years following witnessed its gradual decline and total dissolution.

Mr. L. gives the following statement; "Let us take the four thousand pairs of hands, as stated, and suppose

their weekly gains to average for old and young, ten shillings each ;

This will produce	-	-	-	£2000
Suppose materials	-	-	-	2000
Profit of the Manufacturer, Factor, and Retailer				2000
				<hr/>
				6000
Weeks in the year	-	-	-	52
				<hr/>

Capital employed, if returned only once a year £312,000

And supposing the buckles to sell on the average at two shillings and sixpence a pair, this would show two millions, four hundred and ninety-six thousand pairs, as the quantity annually made. Taking, then, the population of England at twelve millions, and suppose half of them to wear buckles, this would allow each wearer a new pair every three years, and about half a million of pairs for annual exportation ; and this, perhaps, is no improbable supposition. On this calculation also, every workman would make six hundred and twenty-five pairs during the year, which is one dozen pairs per week, or two pairs per day ; which may again be thought a reasonable quantity. Admitting these suppositions to be any thing like a fair approximation to the reality, and we see the importance the trade once held in the scale of individual, local, and national prosperity ; and it should further be stated, that in addition to the number of hands employed as already mentioned, there could not be less than three or four hundred occupied in the manufacturing of the chapes."

It should, however, be understood, that these remarks and calculations should include Walsall, Bilston, Wolverhampton, and their vicinities, as supplying a considerable proportion of the whole.

This article, like most others of Birmingham manufacture, will show the great advantages of the division of labour. Every buckle that was plated on an iron bottom

and stamped, the master manufacturer had to pass through twelve different workmen's hands, to keep a separate account with each, and to pay each one on his own charge ; and numerous subordinates were employed in addition, thus facilitating the production of an article, which, had it depended on a single workman, would have been totally impracticable.

### *Swords.*

Swords are not so ancient as many other weapons of defence used in war. The club, the pole-axe, the spear, and the lance, are no doubt more ancient. Swords have not been generally used, till within the last four or five centuries. Birmingham has been famous for the manufacture of them for many centuries, and no doubt from its earliest infancy. Previous to the American War, however, English swords fell into disrepute, and application was made, October 1st, 1783, for leave to import swords and sword-blades from Germany. A member of the board of trade, the Earl of Surrey, afterwards Duke of Norfolk, wrote to Mr. Eyre, of Sheffield, to inform him of this fact, and to solicit such information as would enable him to rebut the statements made upon the inferiority of the English blades. The people of Sheffield were makers of cutting instruments of the more civil kind ; Mr. Eyre therefore, referred the letter to Mr. Gill, of Birmingham. Mr. Gill memorialised the lords of the treasury, stating that swords could be made by him equal to the German ones.

In 1786, one of the East India orders was divided among the English and German manufacturers. Mr. Gill obtained an order from the board, to have the swords of the two countries tried by a test which reduced the blade from thirty-six inches to twenty-nine, from hilt to point, by forcing it into a curved state. Four swords only

were rejected, out of two thousand six hundred and fifty-four, presented by Mr. Gill; one thousand four hundred and twenty-eight, were presented by the German manufacturers, one thousand four hundred were received, and twenty-eight rejected; the other English makers presented three thousand seven hundred and eighty-four, out of which only two thousand seven hundred were received, and one thousand and eighty-four rejected. This being in proportion of one to thirteen, in favour of Mr. Gill's swords, as compared with the foreign ones, and one to one thousand as compared with the others made in England. Sword-blades are made from the best cast steel, and considerable skill is required, in addition to the best materials, to forge them to stand the test to which they are always put to. Upon this, therefore, the first operation, depends their quality. They are taken from the forge, and undergo the first proof. They are struck upon a cylindrical block of wood, upon both edges, the operator using all his strength. They are then struck with great force upon each side, upon a flat slab of very hard wood. One end is then placed between two fixed bars of iron, and a hand-wrench applied to the other, till the point forms almost a right angle with the shoulder. If in any of these operations the blade breaks, cracks, or does not recover its shape, it is returned to the forger, who is at the loss of his labour and the steel. When a bad lot of steel has been in use, I have known nineteen out of twenty break. A good workman, with good materials, will forge fifty blades without producing a bad one. From the time of the French Revolution till 1814, a considerable trade was carried on in Birmingham in this business.

In this, like all other trades where the demand is great, many divisions of labour take place, and it forms about twenty distinct branches, exclusive of the preparers of the materials, toolmakers, &c. Many thousands found



employment in Birmingham during the war. Some few made fortunes, but many were reduced to penury, after the peace of 1814.

### *Guns.*

Though the sword and the gun are equal companions in war, it does not appear they are of equal original. I have already observed, that the sword was the manufacture of Birmingham in the time of the Britons. But tradition tells us, King William was once lamenting, "That guns were not manufactured in his dominions, but that he was obliged to procure them from Holland at a great expense, and greater difficulty." Sir Richard Newdigate, one of the members for the county, being present, told the king "That genius resided in Warwickshire, and that he thought his constituents could answer his majesty's wishes."—The king was pleased with the remark, and the member posted to Birmingham. Upon application to a person in Digbeth, whose name I forget, the pattern was executed with precision, which, when presented to the royal board, gave entire satisfaction. Orders were immediately issued for large numbers, which have been so frequently repeated, that they never lost their road; and the ingenious artists have been so amply rewarded, that they have rolled in their carriages to this day. Thus the same instrument which is death to one man, is genteel life to another.

Such were the facilities, and so admirable were the divisions of labour, during the late French war, that thirty thousand stand of arms were supplied to the government, monthly; this, upon a moderate calculation of the hours of labour, would be two stand of arms per minute the year round. This is exclusive of the manufacture of fowling pieces, which forms a distinct and very considerable trade.

*Leather.*

It may seem singular to a modern eye, to view this place in the light of one vast tan-yard. Though there is no appearance of that necessary article among us, yet Birmingham was once a famous market for leather. Digbeth not only abounded with tanners, but large numbers of hides arrived weekly for sale, where the whole country found a supply. When the weather would allow, they were ranged in columns in the High Street, and at other times deposited in the Leather Hall, at the east end of New Street, appropriated for their reception.

This market was of great antiquity, perhaps not less than seven hundred years, and continued till the beginning of the present century. We have two officers annually chosen, by the name of *leather sealers*, from a power given them by ancient charter, to mark the vendible hides; but now the leather sealers have no duty, but that of taking an elegant dinner; shops are erected upon tan-fats, the Leather Hall is gone to destruction, and we are reduced to one solitary tanner.

*Iron.*

The iron manufacture in Birmingham is not very extensive; there are no furnaces in the town where the ore is first smelted, and only a few where the pigs are reduced to bar iron. Aston furnace, now so near Birmingham, having long been converted to other purposes, the object of establishing which, was for the accommodation afforded by the *woods* in this neighbourhood.

The ores were raised at a distance, and brought by slow and tedious means to this spot for smelting, but after the introduction of coke for smelting, which was much assisted by the steam engine, introduced in place of water wheels, this and similar establishments were discontinued, as the smelting could be carried on best

upon the spot where the ore was raised and plenty of coal at hand. Plot thus describes the iron works as practised in his time, 1686, and as the mode of smelting differs but little from that practised at present, except in the substitution of *coke* for *charcoal*, *steam power* for the *water-wheel*, and the consequent increase in the quantity of iron produced by these changes, it will give some idea of the mode of converting the stone, or *mine*, as it is called into iron.

“ When they have gotten their ore, before it is fit for the *furnace*, they burn or calcine it upon the ground, with small charcoal, wood, or seacoal, to make it break into small pieces, which will be done in three days, and this they call annealing it, or firing it for the furnace. In the meanwhile they also heat their furnace for a weeks’ time with charcoal, without blowing it, which they call seasoning it ; and then they bring the ore to the furnace thus prepared, and throw it in with the charcoal in baskets ; i. e. a basket of ore and then a basket of coal. Two vast pairs of bellows are placed behind the furnace, and compressed alternately by a large wheel turned by water, the fire is made so intense that after three days’ time the metal will begin to run ; still after increasing, till at length in fourteen nights’ time, they can run a *sow* and *pigs* once in twelve hours, which they do in a bed of sand, before the mouth of the furnace ; wherein they make one larger farrow than the rest, near the timp (where the metal comes forth) which is for the *sow*, from whence they draw two or three and twenty others for the *pigs*. They bring their *sows* and *pigs* of iron, when broken asunder and into lengths to the forges.” “ If we look back upon the methods of our ancestors, who made iron in foot blasts, or bloomeries, by men’s treading the bellows, by which way they could make but one little lump or bloom of iron in a day, not one hundred weight ; leaving as much iron in the *slag* as they got out, whereas now they will make two or three tons of

cast iron in twenty-four hours : leaving the slag so *poor*, that the founders cannot melt them again to profit. Not to mention the vast advantage they have from the *new invention* of *slitting mills*, for cutting their *bars* into *rods*, above what they had anciently.”

It also appears from the same work, that many attempts had been made to introduce pit coal for the smelting, which he thus describes, “ The last effort that was made in this country for making iron with *pit coal*, was also by raw coal, by one Mr. Blewstone, at Wednesbury. Many were of opinion that he would succeed in it, but experience, that great baffler of speculation, shewed it would not be.” Any innovation upon established usage, always creates prejudice. It was so with the attempted use of coke for smelting iron. It was only by time, want of material to go on in the old way, and the aid of the steam engine, that the prejudice gradually subsided, and the present mode was generally adopted for this purpose.

The fires in the furnaces are not now suffered to go out, unless to undergo repairs, and two sets of workmen keep them in constant work. A single furnace will now produce in twenty-four hours, from eight to twelve tons of cast iron, which require twenty-four to thirty-six tons of raw mine, thirty to forty-four tons of coal, and eight to twelve tons of limestone, as a flux, that is, ninety-two tons of materials are consumed to produce twelve tons of iron.

The fluctuation in the prices of iron at different periods is very considerable ; in 1825, it rose to £14 per ton ; in 1826 it was reduced to £8, and in 1830 to £5 5s. It is now sold for about £7 per ton.

### *Steel.*

The progress of arts, is equal to the progress of time ; they began, and will end together. Though some of both are lost, yet they both accumulate.



The manufacture of iron, in Birmingham, is ancient beyond research ; that of steel is of modern date.

Pride is inseparable from the human character ; the man without it, is the man without breath. We trace it in various forms, through every degree of people ; but like those objects about us, it is best discovered in our own sphere ; those above, and those below us, rather escape our notice ; envy attacks an equal. Pride induced the pope to look with contempt on the European princes, and it now induces them to return the compliment ; it taught insolence to the Spaniard, selfishness to the Dutch ; it teaches the rival nations of France and England to contend for power. Pride induced a late high bailiff, at the proclamation of our Michaelmas fair, to hold his wand two feet higher than the usual rest, that he might dazzle the crowd with a beautiful glove hanging pendant, a ruffle curiously wrought, a ring set with brilliants, and a hand delicately white. Pride preserves a man from mean actions, it throws him upon meaner ; it whets the sword for destruction, it urges the laudable acts of humanity, it is the universal hinge on which we move, it glides the gentle stream of usefulness, it overflows the mounds of reason, and swells into a destructive flood ; like the sun, in his milder rays, it animates and draws us towards perfection ; but, like him, in its fiercer beams, it scorches and destroys.

Money is not the necessary attendant of pride, for it abounds no where more than in the lowest ranks. It adds a sprucer air to a Sunday dress, casts a look of disdain from a bundle of rags ; it boasts the *honour* of a family, while poverty unites a sole and upper-leather with a bandage of shopthread. There are people who even *pride* themselves in humility.

This dangerous *good*, this necessary *evil*, supports the female character ; without it, the brightest part of the creation would degenerate. It will be asked, " What

portion may be allowed?" Prudence will answer, "As much as you please, but *not* to disgust." It is equally found in the senate-house, and the button-shop; the scene of action is the scene of pride. He who makes steel, prides himself in carrying the art one step higher than he who makes iron.

This art appeared amongst us in the seventeenth century; was introduced by the family of Kettle. The name of Steelhouse Lane will convey to posterity the situation of the works, the commercial spirit of Birmingham will convey the produce to the antipodes.

From this warm, but dismal climate, issues the button which shines on the breast, and the bayonet intended to pierce it; the lancet, which bleeds the man, and the rowel, the horse; the lock which preserves the beloved bottle, and the screw to uncork it; the needle, equally obedient to the thimble and the pole.

### *Steel Pens*

Are a modern invention, and did not become an article of general consumption, till within the last six years. They formerly sold at such high prices, that they were beyond the reach of many persons. Eighteen shillings have been paid for a dozen, and for several years they remained at prices varying from twelve shillings to twenty-four per gross.

Four years ago, three shillings per gross was a small price, but now they can be bought for sixpence per gross. These, of course, are like many other things, *made to sell*. A good article is regularly sold at from threepence to sixpence per dozen, retail. Many thousands of grosses are made weekly in Birmingham. In one manufactory, six thousand grosses can be made in one week. They are used in many schools, and more or less in most offices in this part of the country.

*Brass Works.*

The manufacture of brass was introduced by the family of Turner, in about 1740, who erected those works at the south end of Coleshill Street; then, near two hundred yards beyond the buildings, but now the buildings extend half a mile beyond them.

Under the black clouds which arose from this corpulent tunnel, some of the trades collected their daily supply of brass; but the major part was drawn from the Macclesfield, Cheadle, and Bristol Companies.

“Causes are known by their effects;” the fine feelings of the heart are easily read in the features of the face: the still operations of the mind, are discovered by the rougher operations of the hand. Every creature is fond of power, from that noble head of the creation, man, who devours man, down to that insignificant mite, who devours his cheese: every man strives to be free himself and to shackle another. Where there is power of any kind, whether in the hands of a prince, a people, a body of men, or a private person, there is a propensity to abuse it: abuse of power will everlastingly seek itself a remedy, and frequently find it; nay, even this remedy may in time degenerate to abuse, and call loudly for another.

Brass is an object of some magnitude., in the trades of Birmingham; the consumption is said to be a thousand tons per annum. The manufacture of this useful article had long been in few and opulent hands, who, instead of making the humble bow for favours received, acted with despotic sovereignty, established their own laws, chose their customers, directed the price, and governed the market. In 1780, the article rose, either through caprice, or necessity, perhaps the *former*, from £72 a ton, to £84, the result was, an advance upon the goods manufactured,

followed by a number of counter-orders, and a stagnation of business.

In 1781, a person, from affection to the user, or resentment to the maker, perhaps the *latter*, harangued the public in the weekly papers; censured the arbitrary measures of the brazen sovereigns, showed their dangerous influence over the trades of the town, and the easy manner in which works of our own might be constructed—good often arises out of evil; this fiery match, dipt in brimstone, quickly kindled another furnace in Birmingham. Public meetings were advertised, a committee appointed, and subscriptions opened to fill two hundred shares, of £100 each, deemed a sufficient capital; each proprietor of a share, to purchase one ton of brass annually. Works were immediately erected upon the banks of the canal, for the advantage of water carriage, and the whole was conducted with the true spirit of Birmingham freedom.

The old companies, which we may justly consider the directors of a South Sea bubble in miniature, sunk the price from £84 to £56. Two inferences arise from this measure; that their profits were once very high, or were now very low; and like some former monarchs, in the abuse of power, they repented one day too late.

### *Brass Foundry.*

The curious art before us, is, perhaps, less ancient than profitable, and less healthful than either. I shall not inquire whose grandfather was the first brassfounder here, but shall leave their grandsons to settle that important point with my successor, who shall next write the history of Birmingham. Whoever was the first I believe he figured in the reign of King William; but, though he sold his productions at an excessive price, he did not, like the moderns, possess the art of acquiring a fortune; but now the master knows the way to affluence,



and the servant to liquor. Until the establishment of brass works in Birmingham, the consumption was less than it has ever been since. There was no doubt a considerable demand in this neighbourhood, before the establishment of Turner's works, or where would so large a quantity, which these works were capable of producing, find a market. *Copper* and *zinc* or *speltre*, the components of brass, are not raised in this neighbourhood, therefore there could be no inducement to establish works for smelting and mixing only, unless with some prospect of a consumption on the spot. At Ecton Hill, in the parish of Welton, small quantities of copper ore have been raised. A mine was worked there a few years, but soon discontinued, on account of the poverty of the ores, or the imperfect mode of smelting. At this place some bellows made entirely of wood were in use, which *Plot* calls famous, and to see which he travelled into Derbyshire, and described minutely. This therefore gives the trade of the brassfounder in 1740, considerable importance. The conduct of these brazen monopolists in raising the price of the article in 1780, shews the demand was equal to the supply.

I need not stay to enumerate the articles made in brass, both useful and ornamental; suffice it to say, that numerous as are the productions of this useful metal, they are all more or less made here. And the trade in all its branches, which time, caprice, fashion, taste, and ingenuity have introduced, cannot be out-numbered by any other trade or profession in this place. The great competition which has existed many years, and which still continues, has reduced this trade to a level of many, and below the level of some other trades, both for master and workman. The latter having received considerably more for workmanship, than the master now sells the article for complete. Workmen used to boast of earning their

guinea a day, and I have known an apprentice within the last ten years, earn for his master fifteen shillings in one day; I have known twenty-three persons employed in a manufactory, where steam power was used to propel the lathes in the simple operation of dressing O. G. nobs for drawer handles. One boy was kept constantly at drilling the holes in the nuts, and another constantly tapping or putting on the thread. An apprentice at the age of eighteen, has been kept three weeks doing nothing else but drilling the hole to admit the end of the handle. This would be performed by the other apprentices in turn, many of whom would do nothing but turn the heads of the nobs, for three months together. Four or five boys would be kept constantly taking off the rough from the casting, as many more working after them, putting the screw upon the shank. By these means, a great quantity of these things would be produced. It is by these minute divisions of labour only, that such immense quantities of articles are brought into the market, and sold at prices that astonish those unconnected with the trade.

### *Pins*

Are made from the best brass wire, which is drawn by steam power, by being passed successively through a set of holes in a steel plate, each hole being less than the preceding one. The wire goes through many annealings in the course of this process, and is cleaned with aquafortis. The heads are formed of fine wire, much less in proportion to the weight of the pin. It is wound into ringlets, similar to a brace spring. They are cut off with shears, to the proper length. This is a nice operation, and requires much skill to perform with the required precision. A man will earn £2 per week at this simple operation, and although several of the wires are cut at once, he will

rarely miss cutting them exact. The wire to form the body, is drawn out into straight lengths from the coil, and is then cut into other lengths for the pointer. A circular file, turned by steam power, is used to form the point; this is also a nice operation. As many as can be held conveniently, are pointed at once, and cut off to a guage the length the pin is to be, both ends being pointed first. The wire is again pointed, and again cut, till the length is exhausted and a new one taken. Children are employed in putting on the heads, mostly under the superintendence of women. It is performed by a simple process, and the head is made secure by being struck by a small stamp. The pin then passes through the process of cleaning in aquafortis, and is then boiled in a solution of tin, which gives them the white appearance they have when bought. They are afterwards dried in bran, and are then weighed, or put upon paper ready for sale.

### *Nails.*

In most occupations, the profit of the master and the journeyman bear a proportion. If the former is able to figure in genteel life, the latter is able to figure in silk stockings. If the master can afford to allow upon his goods ten per cent. discount for money, the servant can afford to squander half his wages. In a worn-down trade, where the tides of profit are reduced to a low ebb, and where imprudence sets her foot upon the premises, the master and the man starve together. Only *half* this is our present case.

The art of nail-making is one of the most ancient among us; we safely charge its antiquity with four figures. We cannot consider it a trade *in*, so much as *of* Birmingham; for we have but few nailmakers left in the town; our nailers are chiefly masters, and rather opulent. The manufacturers are so scattered round the country, that we cannot travel

far, in any direction, out of the sound of the nail-hammer. But Birmingham, like a powerful magnet, draws the produce of the anvil to herself.

When I first approached her, from Walsall, in 1741, I was surprised at the number of blacksmiths' shops upon the road; and could not conceive how a country, though populous, could support so many people of the same occupation. In some of these shops I observed one or more females, stripped of their uppergarment, and not overcharged with their lower, wielding the hammer with all the grace of the sex. The beauties of their face were rather eclipsed by the smut of the anvil; or, in poetical phrase, the tincture of the forge had taken possession of those lips, which might have been taken by the kiss. Struck with the novelty, I inquired, "Whether the ladies in this country shod horses?" but was answered, with a smile, "They are nailers."

A fire without heat, a nailer of a fair complexion, or one who despises the tankard, are equally rare among them. His whole system of faith may be comprised in one article. That the slender twopenny mug, used in a public-house, is *deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*.

While the master reaps the harvest of plenty, the workman submits to the scanty gleanings of penury, a thin habit, an early old age, and a figure bending towards the earth. Plenty comes not near his dwelling, except of rags, and of children. But few recruits arise from his nail-shop, except for the army. His hammer is worn into deep hollows, fitting the fingers of a dark and plump hand, hard as the timber it wears. His face, like the moon, is often seen through a cloud.

#### *Cut Nails.*

This is one of the many inventions which ingenuity suggests, and capital can carry to any extent. The old nailer required little capital to start him in business. A



bundle of iron, a pair of bellows, a hammer, and an anvil, would be all he would require, his own ingenuity would overcome every other obstacle, and supply every other want. Nails were first cut by hand presses, but the presses are now worked by machinery, propelled by steam power. Sheet iron rolled to various thicknesses, to suit the various kinds of nails to be cut are divided into strips, just as wide as the nail is required to be long, this is performed by circular sheers, the strips are then straightened and applied to the press. Many useful sorts of nails are produced by these means, to the amount of many tons annually. Great quantities of nails are made by casting them in rows similar to buttons, or any other small article, both of iron, brass, and brass heads, only the spikes of the latter being laid in the mould, and the metal fastens round them.

### *Bellows.*

Man first catches the profession; the profession afterwards moulds the man. In whatever profession we engage, we assume its character, become a part of it, vindicate its honour, its eminence, its antiquity; or feel a wound through its sides. Though there may be no more pride in a minister of state, who opens a budget, than a tinker who carries one, yet they equally contend for the honour of their trade.

The bellows-maker proclaims the *honour* of his art, by observing, he alone produces that instrument which commands the winds; his soft breeze, like that of the south, counteracts the chill blasts of winter; by his efforts like those of the sun, the world receives light; he *creates* when he pleases, and gives *breath* when he creates. In his caverns the winds sleep at pleasure; and by his *orders* they set Europe in flames. He farther pretends, that the *antiquity* of his occupation will appear from the plenty of elm, once in the neighbourhood, but long cut up for his use; that the leather-market in Birmingham, for many ages, furnished

him with sides ; and though the manufacture of iron is allowed to be extremely ancient, yet the smith could not procure his heat without a blast, nor could that blast be raised without the bellows. One inference will arise from these remarks, that bellows-making is one of the oldest trades in Birmingham.

### *Thread.*

We, who reside in the interior parts of the kingdom, may observe the first traces of a river issue from its fountain ; the current so extremely small, that if a bottle of liquor, distilled through the urinary vessels, was discharged into its course, it would manifestly augment the water, and quicken the stream : the reviving bottle, having added spirits to the man, seems to add spirits to the river. If we pursue this river, winding through one hundred and thirty miles, we shall observe it collect strength as it runs, expand its borders, swell into consequence, employ multitudes of people, carry wealth in its bosom, and exactly resemble *thread-making* in Birmingham. If we represent to our idea, a man able to employ three or four people, himself in an apron, one of the number ; but being *unable* to write his name, shews his attachment to the christian religion, by signing the *cross* to receipts ; whose method of book-keeping, like that of the publican, is *a door and a lump of chalk* ; producing a book which none can peruse but himself ; who having manufactured 40lb. weight of thread, of divers colours, and rammed it into a pair of leather bags, something larger than a pair of boots, which we might deem the *arms* of his trade *empaled* ; slung them on a horse, and placed himself on the top, by way of a *crest* ; visits an adjacent market, to starve with his goods at a stall, or retail them to the mercer, nor return without the money—we shall see a thread-maker of 1652. If we pursue this occupation, winding through the mazes of one hundred and

thirty *years*, we shall enlarge its boundaries, multiply its people, increase its consequence and wealth, till 1782, when we behold the master in possession of correct accounts, the apron thrown aside, the stall kicked over, the bags tossed into the garret, and the mercer overlooked in the grand prospect of exportation. We farther behold him take the lead in provincial concerns, step into his own carriage, and hold the king's commission as a magistrate.

*Printing,*

BY JOHN BASKERVILLE.

The pen of an historian rejoices in the actions of the great; the fame of the deserving, like an oak tree, is of sluggish growth. The present generation becomes debtor to him who excels, but the future will discharge that debt with more than simple interest. The still voice of fame may warble in his ears towards the close of life, but her trumpet seldom sounds in full clarion, till those ears are stopped with the finger of death.

This son of genius was born at Wolverley, in the county of Worcester, in 1706; heir to a personal estate of £60 per annum, which fifty years after, while in his own possession, had increased to £90. He was trained to a stonecutter; but, in 1726, became a writing master in Birmingham. In 1737, he taught school in the Bull Ring, and is said to have written an excellent hand.

As painting suited his talents, he entered into the lucrative branch of japanning, and resided at No. 22, in Moor Street.

He took in 1745, a building lease of eight acres, two furlongs north-west of the town, to which he gave the name of *Easy-Hill*, converted into a little Eden, and built a house in the centre; but the town, as if conscious of his merit, followed his retreat, and surrounded it with buildings. Here he continued the business of a japanner for life; his

carriage, in each pannel of which was a distinct picture, might be considered the *pattern-card of his trade*, and was drawn by a beautiful pair of cream-coloured horses.

His inclination for letters induced him, in 1750, to turn his thoughts towards the press. He spent many years in the uncertain pursuit, sunk £600 before he could produce one letter to please himself, and some thousands before the shallow stream of profit began to flow.

His first attempt, in 1756, was a quarto edition of Virgil, price one guinea, now worth several.—He afterwards printed *Paradise Lost*, the Bible, Common Prayer, Roman and English Classics, &c. in various sizes, with more satisfaction to the literary world than emolument to himself.

In 1765, he applied to his friend, Dr. Franklin, then at Paris, and now ambassador from America, to sound the literati, respecting the purchase of his types; but received for answer, “That the French, reduced by the war of 1756, were so far from pursuing schemes of taste, that they were unable to repair their public buildings, but suffered the scaffolding to rot before them.”

In private life he was a humourist; idle in the extreme; but his invention was of the true Birmingham model, active. He could well design, but procured others to execute; wherever he found merit, he caressed it. He was remarkably polite to the stranger, fond of shew; a figure rather of the smaller size, and delighted to adorn that figure with gold lace. During the twenty-five years I knew him, though in the decline of life, he retained the singular traces of a handsome man. If he exhibited a peevish temper, we may consider, goodnature and intense thinking are not always found together. Taste accompanied him through the different walks of agriculture, architecture, and the finer arts. Whatever passed through his fingers, bore the lively marks of John Baskerville. His aversion to Christianity would not suffer him to lie among Christians; he therefore erected



a mausoleum in his own grounds for his remains, and died without issue, in 1775, at the age of sixty-nine.—Many efforts were used after his death to dispose of the types ; but, to the lasting discredit of the British nation, no purchaser could be found in the whole commonwealth of letters. The universities coldly rejected the offer. The London booksellers understood no science like that of profit. The valuable property therefore lay a dead weight, till purchased by a literary society at Paris, in 1779, for £3700

It is an old remark, that no country abounds with genius so much as this island ; and it is a remark nearly as old, that genius is nowhere so little rewarded ; how else came Dryden, Goldsmith, and Chatterton to want bread ? Is merit, like a flower of the field, too common to attract notice ? or is the use of money beneath the care of exalted talents ?

Invention seldom pays the inventor. If you ask, what fortune Baskerville ought to have been rewarded with ? “ The *most* which can be comprised in five figures.” If you farther ask, what he possessed ? “ The *least* ; but none of it squeezed from the press.” What will the shade of this great man think, if capable of thinking, that he has spent a fortune of opulence, and a life of genius, in carrying to perfection the greatest of all human inventions ; and his productions, slighted by his country, were hawked over Europe, in quest of a bidder ? his example has since taught others to equal him.

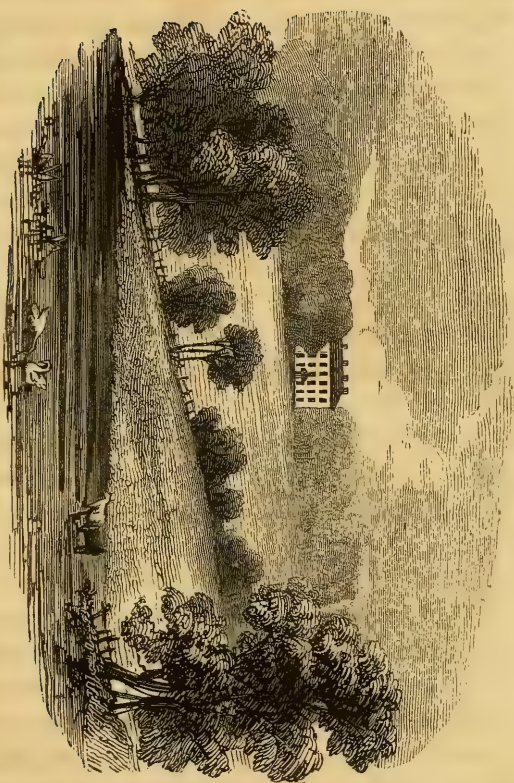
We must *revere*, if we do not *imitate*, the taste and economy of the French nation, who, brought by the British arms, in 1762, to the verge of ruin, rising above distress, were able, in seventeen years, to purchase Baskerville’s elegant types, and expend £100,000 in printing the works of Voltaire !

*Brewery.*

The two props of eating and drinking, like the two legs of a man, support his body. Without them, he would make but a miserable shift. They give equal relief, are nearly of equal standing. If the antiquary finds pleasure in the researches of a few centuries, what will he find in these two amusements? They are the two oldest fashions we know! He may readily trace their origin to Adam. He may pursue, with some precision, the fashions of dress, through 5000 years, but the fashions of eating and drinking, are, at least, one day older. The love of life, the desire of the sex towards each other, the fear of death, and the relish for food, make a part of our nature, and are planted in us for the preservation of our race. If the pleasure of infusing existence was no greater than that of destroying it; if the dread of death, was no more than that of sleep; and the pleasure of taking sustenance, no greater than that of discharging it, annihilation would follow. The first thing we learn, is to cry for food; the last, to die when we cease to take it. Could we sustain life without it, or procure it without trouble, the manufactures would cease. Invention might assist us with regard to fire and clothing, but there is no food without labour. One would think the Israelites must have made but a despicable figure in the eyes of the active, philosophical, or commercial world, for spending forty years idle in the wilderness. It is no wonder want of employment bred discontent.

In 1752, a brewery was instituted in the Hinkleys; but, as the practice of the inhabitants was to brew their own drink, it fell, for want of success. In 1782, another was erected in Moseley Street.

A person from London, in 1784, erected a brewery near the Ikenield Street (Warston Lane,) to furnish the town with porter in the London style. This is supplied by a



EDGBASTON HALL





small rivulet two hundred yards distant ; which, in the year 1400, guarded a castle inhabited by a branch of the Birmingham family. Thus the humble water, as if attentive to the service of man, still retains its ancient use of preserving life. Its former master kept it for his private benefit ; its present, sells it for his. It then secured the property of the owner, it now wastes that of the user. From the extensive scale upon which this work is pursued, the proprietor may be said “ to barrel up a river ;” and the inhabitants, “ to swallow a stream which ran useless for ages.”

This brewery is now carried on by the “ *Wharstone and Deritend Brewery Company*,” who have an establishment in Deritend, as their name imports ; there is also the “ *Broad Street Brewery Company*,” and numerous breweries carried on by private individuals. Our townsmen are not such drunkards as they are said to have been thirty or forty years ago ; those who would have been drunkards, have joined the Temperance Society, and consume a pound and a half of butcher’s meat, a nice little chicken and a corner of a venison pie, at a meal ; and instead of a red nose, or an emaciated countenance, they carry a portly “ brummagem belly,” and a face as round as a new copper kettle.

### *Umbrella.*

The manufacture of plated hollow ware, umbrellas, &c., are of modern date. In 1780, umbrellas were first used in Birmingham, but some years passed away before they became an article of general use, scoffs, jeers, and “ wicked wit,” had a long contest with comfort and convenience ; but after seven or eight years, wit lay sprawling on all-fours, but being of a sprightly temperament he sprang up to try his powers upon another subject. A Jew, who scents profit, as an eagle scents his prey, or a mouse a bit of cheese, was the first merchant who carried umbrellas, of Birmingham manufacture, out of the town. The article

was first made of oiled cloth, copper stretchers, a wooden stick, and a ring to hang it up by. It is now made of silk, or gingham, whalebone ribs, iron stretchers, a bamboo cane, or copper tubing for the stick, the end mounted by an ivory or pressed horn hook, or the head of Wellington, Brougham, Punch, or some other great man, carved in ivory. From eighty to one hundred men, and from five to six hundred children, are employed in the trade; and sets for five thousand gross of umbrellas are annually made.

Professors also increase with mechanics, for the medical gentlemen, who, in 1781, were twenty-four, are, in 1791, forty-three, and in 1834, nearly innumerable. Those of the law held the same proportion, and are multitudinous.

To enumerate the great variety of occupations among us, would be as useless, and as unentertaining to the reader, perhaps to the writer, as to count the pebbles in the street.

Having therefore visited a few, by way of specimen, I shall desist from further pursuit, and wheel of in a

### *Hackney Coach.*

Wherever the view of profit opens, the eyes of a Birmingham man are open to see it.

In 1775, a person was determined to try if a hackney coach would take with the inhabitants. He had not mounted the box many times before he inadvertently dropped the expression, "thirty shillings a day!" The word was attended with all the powers of magic, for instantaneously a second rolled into the circus. And these elevated sons of the lash are now augmented to seventy-one, whom we may justly denominate a club of tippling deities, who preside over weddings, christenings, and pleasurable excursions.

It would give satisfaction to the curious calculator, could any mode be found of discovering the returns of trade, made by the united inhabitants. But the question is com-

plicated. It only admits of surmise. From comparing many instances in various ranks among us, I have been led to suppose, that the weekly returns exceed the annual rent of the buildings. And as these rents are nearly ascertained, perhaps, we may conclude, that those returns are about £100,000., and allowing for holidays about £4,000,000, a year.

### *Bank.*

Perhaps a public bank is as necessary to the health of the commercial body, as exercise to the natural. The circulation of the blood and spirits are promoted by one, as are cash and bills by the other ; and a stagnation is equally detrimental to both. Few places are without ; yet Birmingham, famous in the annals of traffic, could boast no such claim. To remedy this defect, about every tenth trader was a banker, or, a retailer of cash. At the head of these were marshalled the whole train of drapers and grocers, till the year 1765, when a regular bank was constituted by Messrs. Taylor and Lloyd, two opulent tradesmen, whose credit being equal to that of the bank of England, quickly collected the shining rays of sterling property into its focus.—Wherever the earth produces grass, an animal will be found to eat it. Success produced a second bank, by Robert Coales, Esq., a third by Francis Goodall, Esq. & Co.; and in 1791, a fourth by Isaac Spooner, Esq. & Co.

In 1824, the Birmingham tradesmen were accommodated by the following banks :—

Messrs. Attwoods and Spooners

Taylors and Lloyds

Moilliet, Smith, and Pearson

Smith, Gibbins, Goode, and Co.

Rottons and Co.

Galtor and James.

All of these banks withstood the frenzied panic of 1825, excepting Smith, Gibbins, Goode, and Co., and the result of their bankruptcy has proved that their assets were equal to their demands, had not the extraordinary "run" which they suffered precipitated a failure.

Birmingham has partaken of the general attachment to joint stock banks which has pervaded the kingdom since 1825, and two of the banks which were tested by the panic, and two others since established, have given way to the general feeling, finding the quantity of business unable to afford their usual profit. The banks are now, (1834), as follow :—

Messrs. Attwood and Spooners

Taylors and Lloyds

Moilliet, Smith, and Moilliet

The Birmingham Banking Company

Bank of Birmingham

Bank of England, Branch

Northern and Central Bank of England, ditto.

National Provincial, ditto.

Commercial, ditto.

The two Birmingham companies have erected very splendid buildings in which to carry on their business ;—the Bank of Birmingham, partly, and the Banking Company, mainly from the premiums given for shares after the few first allotments.

### *Wealth.*

I have often taken the liberty of wandering rather wide of Birmingham, in my historical remarks ; but in this visionary chapter, I must, like Anson, take the liberty of compassing the globe. By the laws of the quill, an author, under severe penalties, is forbid to sleep ; nay, if he suffers a reader to sleep, he may, like a woman guilty of petty treason, *be condemned to the flames* ; but he is no where forbid to play, or to shift his station ; he who plays, may



amuse another as much as himself, and we all know, he who writes is often, through *poverty*, obliged to shift his station.

If we survey this little world, vast in our idea, but small compared to immensity, we shall find it crusted over with property, fixed and moveable. Upon this crusty world, subsist animals of various kinds ; one of which, something short of six feet, who moves erect, and seems the only one without a tail, takes the lead in pride, and in the command of this property. Fond of power, and conscious that possessions give it, he is ever attempting by force, fraud, or laudable means, to arrive at both.

Fixed property bears a value according to its situation ; ten thousand acres in a place like London, and its environs, would be an immense fortune, such as no man ever possessed ; while ten thousand, in some parts would not be worth a shilling. No king to govern, no subject to submit, no market to exhibit property, no property to exhibit, instead of striving to get possession, he would ; if cast on the spot, strive to get away. Thus assemblages of people mark a place with value.

Moveable property is of two sorts, that which, with the assistance of man, arises from the earth ; and the productions of art, which wholly arise from his labour. A small degree of industry supplies the wants of nature, a little more furnishes the comforts of life, and a farther little, the luxuries. A man, by labour, first removes his own wants, then, with the overplus of that labour, purchases the labour of another. Thus, by furnishing a hat for the barber, the latter procures a wig for himself : the tailor, by making a coat for another, is enabled to buy cloth for his own. It follows, the larger the body of people, the more likely to cultivate a spirit of industry ; the greater that industry, the greater its produce ; consequently, the more they will supply the calls of others, and the more lucrative will be the returns to themselves.

It may be asked, what is the meaning of the word *rich*? Some have termed it, a little more than a man has; others, the possession of a certain sum, *not very small*; others again, as much as will content him. Perhaps all are wrong. A man may be rich, possessed only of one hundred pounds; he may be poor, possessed of one hundred thousand. He alone is rich, whose income is more than he uses.

Industry, though excellent, will perform but half the work; she must be assisted by economy; without this, a ministerial fortune would be defective. These two qualities, separated from each other, like a knife from the handle, are of little use; but like that, they become valuable when united. Economy without industry, will barely appear in a whole coat; industry without economy, will appear in rags. The first is detrimental to the community, by preventing the circulation of property, the last is detrimental to itself. It is a singular remark, that even industry is sometimes the way to poverty. Industry, like a new cast guinea, retains its sterling value, but, like that, it will not pass currently till it receives a sovereign stamp; economy is the stamp which gives it currency. I well knew a man who began business with £1500. Industry seemed the end for which he was made, and in which he wore himself out. While he laboured from four in the morning till eight at night, in the construction of gimlets, his family consumed twice his produce. Had he spent less time at the anvil, and more in teaching the lessons of frugality, he might have lived in credit. Thus the father was ruined by industry, and his children have, for many years, been fixed on the parish books. The people of Birmingham are more apt to *get* than to *keep*.

Though a man, by his labour, may treat himself with many things, yet he seldom grows rich. Riches are generally acquired by purchasing the labour of others.

He who buys the labour of one hundred people, may acquire ten times as much as by his own.

What then has that capricious damsel, Fortune, to do in this chain of argument? Nothing. He who has capacity, attention, and economy, has a fortune within himself. She does not command *him*, he commands *her*.

Having explained the word *riches*, and pointed out the road to them, let us examine their use. They enable a man with great facility to shake off an old friend, once an equal; and forbid access to inferiors, except a toad-eater. Sometimes they add to his name, the pretty appendage of Right Honourable, Bart., or Esq. an addition much coveted, which, should he happen to become an author, is an easy passport through the gates of fame. His very features seem to take a turn from his fortune, and a curious eye may easily read in his face, the word *consequence*. They change the tone of his voice from the submissive to the commanding, in which he well knows how to throw in a few graces. His style is convincing. Money is of singular efficacy; it clears his head, refines his sense, points his joke. The weight of his fortune adds weight to his argument. If, my dear reader, you have been a silent spectator at the Shakspeare Tavern; a general meeting for public business; the low Bailiff's feast; at Hobson's or at Jones', you may have observed many a smart thing said, unheeded, by the man without money; and many a paltry one echoed with applause, from the man with it. The room in silent attention hears one, while the other can scarcely hear himself. They direct a man to various ways of being carried with great ease, who is too idle to carry himself; nay, they invert the order of things, for we often behold two men, who seem hungry, carry one who is full fed. They add refinement to his palate, prominence to his belly, scent to his leavings, scarlet to his nose. They frequently ward off old age. The ancient rules of moderation being

broken, luxury enters in all her pomp, followed by a group of diseases, with a physician in *their* train, and the rector in *his*. Phials, prayers, tears, and gallipots, close the sad scene, and the individual has the honour to rot in state, before old age can advance. His place may be readily supplied with a *joyful mourner*.

There are people among us, who manage matters with such address, that they pay their way with credit, live after the rate of £500 or £600 a year, without a shilling of their own. In doubtful prospects, the shadow may be taken for the substance. A tree may flourish to the sight, and be rotten at the root. There are others, who have acquired £20,000, yet appear to the eye much in the style of journeymen. He who has been long inured to his dusty shops, and whose shops have paid him, deems it a sin to forsake them.

The wealth of our principal inhabitants, December the 10th, 1783, may be comprised in the following table. Perhaps we have

3 who possess upwards of £100,000. each.		
7	————	50,000
8	———	30,000
17	————	20,000
80	————	10,000
94	————	5,000

Some one may ask, “How came you to know what property the inhabitants are possessed of; they never told you?” I answer, the man long accustomed to shoot with a gun, cannot be a bad shooter; he will sometimes hit the mark, seldom be far from it. The man who has guessed for thirty years, cannot be a bad guesser.

I have written, *you see*, an extensive chapter, consisting of many pages, merely for the sake of a few figures, which compose six crabbed lines, cut short at both ends. Instead of making a little cabinet to hold the treasure, I may be



charged with making a *house* ! But let me observe, this treasure has taken more time in ascertaining, than the house in building.

A reader, fond of figures, will quickly perceive that I have selected two hundred and nine people, who take the lead among five thousand, by commanding a property of £3,500,000.

Out of the two hundred and nine, one hundred and three began the world with nothing but their own prudence. Thirty-five more had fortunes added to their prudence, but too small to be brought into account ; and seventy-one persons were favoured with a larger, which, in many instances is much improved. Hence it follows, that the above sum is chiefly acquired by the present inhabitants. But we are not to suppose, Birmingham, during this age, has increased in wealth to that amount. While these two hundred and nine fortunes have been making, twice that number of various sizes, have been spent, divided, or carried off. But all the two hundred and nine are of modern date, not one of them having passed through three descents.

Many occasions have offered in the course of this work, which obliged me to pay a just compliment to the merit of the inhabitants, and which I gladly embraced ; but no occasion surpasses the present.—A fortune justly gained, is a credit to the man who gains it ; and is generally considered by him who has it, and him who has it not, a pretty conveniency. It is a benefit to others. A man cannot acquire ten thousand pounds by fair trade, without ten thousand persons being gainers by the acquirement. It confers a singular honour on the place of his success. Pride may afterwards induce him to be ashamed of the place, but the place is never ashamed of him.

These observations corroborate a remark in the beginning of the work, that we are well able to *fabricate* gentlemen, but not to *keep* them. Birmingham, a fertile field, yields

a copious harvest, which attracts the inhabitants fifty miles round it ; some of whom glean a fortune, and retreat with the prize.

In *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, Sept. 1, 1828 the following statement was presented to the public, with the signature of James Luckcock.

*Estimate of the supposed Wealth of Birmingham.*

Total population . . . . .		100,000
Females . . . . .		50,000
Adult Males . . . . .		25,000
Persons	Property	Amount
1 . . . . .	400,000 . . . . .	400,000
2 . . . . .	300,000 . . . . .	600,000
3 . . . . .	200,000 . . . . .	600,000
4 . . . . .	150,000 . . . . .	600,000
5 . . . . .	100,000 . . . . .	500,000
6 . . . . .	80,000 . . . . .	480,000
10 . . . . .	50,000 . . . . .	500,000
20 . . . . .	30,000 . . . . .	600,000
30 . . . . .	20,000 . . . . .	600,000
50 . . . . .	15,000 . . . . .	750,000
70 . . . . .	10,000 . . . . .	700,000
100 . . . . .	5,000 . . . . .	500,000
200 . . . . .	2,000 . . . . .	400,000
400 . . . . .	1,000 . . . . .	400,000
1,000 . . . . .	500 . . . . .	500,000
2,000 . . . . .	250 . . . . .	500,000
3,000 . . . . .	100 . . . . .	300,000
4,000 . . . . .	50 . . . . .	200,000
5,000 . . . . .	25 . . . . .	125,000
5,000 . . . . .	15 . . . . .	75,000
4,092 . . . . .	0 . . . . .	0
		Female property 670,000
<hr/> 25,000 <hr/>		<hr/> £10,000,000 <hr/>

After repeated attempts to produce a graduated scale on the subject, that should most approve itself to my judgment, the one here given appeared as near to the reality as mere supposition could supply. I felt satisfied that the statement came within the bounds of probability, and I then (and not before) bethought me of comparing it with some statistical tables which I recollected having seen in the *British Encyclopedia*; and was surprised and gratified at the exact coincidence of the two calculations. The writers there state the population of England and Scotland at 11,000,000 and the probable amount of the total wealth to be £1,272,800,000—and this taken for the year 1801. An increase of the population since that period is undisputed, and if, for the sake of round numbers, we admit it to be 2,000,000, and suppose only £27,200,000 to be added to the wealth we have 13,000,000 of persons, and £1,300,000,000 for their property, which averages £100 to each individual, man, woman, child, or pauper; and corroborates my statement on as good authority as the question perhaps admits.

It would thus appear that there are three individuals, in or connected with the town who may possess £1,000,000 of pounds — ten holding £2,000,000 — twenty with £3,000,000—fifty with 4,000,000—and an hundred with £5,000,000—and thus shewing that one hundred and eighty-three individuals hold half the property of the whole. This amount, however, is not the result of a sweeping conjecture, but founded on a list of individuals taken separately, which I should have no objection to shew to any one who may have the curiosity to request it, but which it might not be perfectly discreet to publish. Considering then the whole country as a joint stock company,

the possessor of 10,000 shares has £1,000,000

4,000 . . . 400,000

200 . . . 20,000

10 . . . 1,000

1 . . . 100

while on the other hand a fourth part may be considered as having no share at all—a tenth as being ten to a share—a twentieth as one share to each, and so on as conjecture may ramble. An annual contribution of one per cent on the £10,000,000 stated would produce £100,000, which would abundantly supply funds for the maintenance of the poor, the church levies, the county rates, and in short, the whole of the parochial claims, and leave a surplus more than all the present numerous charitable institutions require for their support. To the man of calculation, or to the patriot and philanthropist, innumerable suggestions must present themselves on the mind being turned to the subject.

On comparing this statement with Mr. Hutton's, the coincidence will be found closer than might have been expected, considering that it was made without any recollection that such a calculation existed—the chief difference consists in allotting to nine persons a higher amount in the scale than at the previous period—and which perhaps will be generally admitted to be a reasonable advance.

*Paupers receiving Relief in Birmingham.*

Years.	Paupers.	Years.	Paupers.
1807 . . . . .	9,391	1817 . . . . .	20,847
1808 . . . . .	9,796	1818 . . . . .	13,755
1809 . . . . .	10,389	1819 . . . . .	14,094
1810 . . . . .	10,571	1820 . . . . .	14,702
1811 . . . . .	10,191	1821 . . . . .	14,742
1812 . . . . .	10,726	1822 . . . . .	11,049
1813 . . . . .	12,241	1823 . . . . .	10,496
1814 . . . . .	11,874	1824 . . . . .	10,629
1815 . . . . .	11,274	1825 . . . . .	10,728
1816 . . . . .	13,516	1826 . . . . .	11,619



*Government.*

Have you, my dear reader, seen a sword hilt, of curious, and of Birmingham manufacture, covered with spangles of various sizes, every one of which carries a separate lustre, but, when united has a dazzling effect? Or, have you seen a ring, from the same origin, set with diamonds of many dimensions, the least of which sparkles with amazing beauty, but, when beheld in cluster, surprise the beholder? Or, have you, in a frosty evening, seen the heavens bespangled with refulgent splendour, each stud shining with intrinsic excellence, but, viewed in the aggregate, reflect honour upon the maker, and enliven the hemisphere? Such is the British government. Such is that excellent system of polity, which shines, the envy of the stranger, and the protector of the native.

Every city, town, and village in the English hemisphere, has a separate jurisdiction of its own, and may justly be deemed *a stud in the grand lustre*.

Though the British constitution is as far from perfection, as the glory of the ring and the hilt are from that of the sun which causes it, or the stars from the day; yet perhaps it stands higher in the scale of excellence, than that of its neighbours. We may, with propriety, allow that body to shine with splendour, which has been polishing for seventeen hundred years. Much honour is due to the patriotic merit which advanced it to its present eminence.

Though Birmingham is but one sparkle of the brilliant cluster, yet she is a sparkle of the first *water*, and of the first *magnitude*.

The more perfect any system of government, the happier the people. A wise government will punish for the commission of crimes, but a wiser will endeavour to prevent them. Man is an active animal; if he is not employed in some useful pursuit, he will employ himself in mischief: example is prevalent. If one man falls into error, he often

draws another. Though heaven, for wise purposes, suffers a people to fulfil the measure of their iniquities, a prudent state will nip them in the bud.

It is easy to point out some places, only one-third the magnitude of Birmingham, whose frequent breaches of the law, and quarrels among themselves, find employment for half a dozen magistrates, and four times that number of constables; whilst the business of this was for many years conducted by a single justice, the late John Wyrley, Esq. If the reader should think that I am mistaken; and object, that parish affairs cannot be conducted without a second? Let me reply, He conducted that second also.

As human nature is nearly the same, whether in or out of Birmingham; and as enormities seem more prevalent out than in, we may reasonably ascribe the cause to the extraordinary industry of the inhabitants, not allowing time to brood over, and bring forth mischief, equal to places of inferior diligence.

There were in 1795 two acting magistrates to hold the beam of justice, the Rev. Benjamin Spencer, and Joseph Carless, Esq. who both resided at a distance. There are now ten who live in or near the town.

Many of our corporate towns received their charters from that amiable, but unfortunate prince, Henry the Second. These were the first dawnings of British liberty, after fixing the Norman yoke. They were afterwards ratified and improved by the subsequent Kings of England, granting not only the manors, but many exclusive privileges. But at this day, those places which were so remarkably favoured with the smiles of royalty, are not quite so free as those that were not. The prosperity of this happy place proves the assertion, of which every man is free the moment he enters.

We often behold a pompous corporation, which sounds well in history, over something like a dirty village. This

is a head without a body. The very reverse is our case—we are a body without a head. For though Birmingham has undergone an amazing alteration in extension, riches, and population, yet the government is nearly the same as the Saxons left it. This part of my important history therefore must suffer an eclipse; this illustrious chapter, that rose in dazzling brightness, must be veiled in the thick clouds of obscurity; I shall figure with my corporation in a despicable light. I am not able to bring upon the stage a mayor, and a group of aldermen, dressed in antique scarlet, bordered with fur, drawing a train of attendants; the meanest of which, even the pinder, is badged with silver; nor treat my guest with a band of music, in scarlet cloaks with broad laces. I can grace the hand of my Birmingham fidler with only a rusty instrument, and his back with barely a whole coat; neither have I a mace, charged with armorial bearings, for the inauguration of the chief magistrate. The reader, therefore, must either quit the place, or be satisfied with such entertainment as that place affords.

The officers, who are annually chosen to direct in this prosperous seat of fortune, are

An High Bailiff.

Two High Tasters.

Low Bailiff.

Two Low Tasters.

Two Constables.

Two Affeirers, and

Headborough.

Two Leather Sealers.

All which, the constables excepted, are no more than servants to the lord of the manor; and whose duty extends no farther, than to the preservation of the manorial rights.

The high bailiff is to inspect the market, and see that justice takes place between buyer and seller; to rectify the weights and dry measures used in the manor.

The low bailiff summons a jury, who choose all the other officers, and generally with prudence. But the most

important part of his office is, to treat his friends at the expense of about seventy pounds.

The headborough is only an assistant to the constables, chiefly in time of absence.

High tasters examine the goodness of beer, and its measure.

Low tasters inspect the meat exposed to sale, and cause that to be destroyed which is unfit for use.

Affairers ratify the chief rent and amercements, between the lord and the inhabitant. And the

Leather sealers, stamped a public seal upon the hides, when Birmingham was a market for leather.

These manorial servants, instituted by ancient charter, chiefly possess a name, without an office. Thus order seems assisted by industry, and thus a numerous body of inhabitants are governed without a governor.

Exclusive of the choice of officers, the jury impannelled by the low bailiff, have the presentation of all encroachments upon the lord's waste, which has long been neglected. The duties of office are little known, except that of taking a generous dinner, which is punctually observed. It is too early to begin business till the table is well stored with bottles, and too late afterwards.

During the existence of the house of Birmingham, the court-leet was held at the Moat, in what we should now think a large and shabby room, conducted under the eye of the low bailiff, at the expense of the lord. The jury, twice a year, were witnesses that the famous dish of roast beef, ancient as the family who gave it, demanded the head of the table.

The court was afterwards held at the Leather Hall, and the expense, which was trifling, borne by the bailiff. Time, prosperity, and emulation, are able to effect considerable changes. The jury, in the beginning of the present century, were impannelled in the Old Cross, then



newly erected, from whence they adjourned to the house of the bailiff, and were feasted at the growing charge of *two or three pounds*. This practice continued till about the year 1735, when the company, grown too bulky for a private house, assembled at the tavern, and the bailiff enjoyed the singular privilege of consuming ten pounds upon his guests.

It is easier to advance in expenses than to retreat. In 1760, they had increased to forty pounds, and in the next edition of this work, we may expect to see the word *hundred*, and hundred must accordingly appear. The lord was anciently founder of the feast, and treated his bailiff; but now that custom is inverted, and the bailiff treats his lord.

The proclamation of our two fairs, is performed by the high bailiff, in the name of the lord of the manor; this was done a century ago, without the least expense. But the strength of his liquor, a silver tankard, and the pride of shewing it, perhaps induced him, in process of time, to treat his attendants. His ale, without a miracle, was, in a few years, converted into wine, and that of various sorts; to which was added, a small collation; and now his friends are complimented with a card, to meet him at the hotel, where he incurs an expense of thirty pounds. While the spirit of the people refines by intercourse, industry, and the singular jurisdiction among us, this insignificant pimple, on our head of government, swells into a wen, and has been proud enough to invite the prime minister and his man.

Habits approved are soon acquired: a third entertainment has, of late years, sprung up, termed *the constables' feast*, with this difference, *it is charged to the public*. We may consider it a wart on the political body, which merits the caustic—the caustic has been applied.

Deritend, being a hamlet of Birmingham, sends her inhabitants to the court-leet, where they perform suit and service, and where her constable is chosen by the same jury.

I shall here exhibit a defective list of our principal

officers during the last century. If it should be objected, that a petty constable is too insignificant, being the lowest officer of the crown, for admission into history ; I answer, by whatever appellation an officer is accepted, he cannot be insignificant who stands at the head of 70,000 people. Perhaps, therefore, the office of constable may be sought for in future, and the officer himself assume a superior consequence.

The dates are the years in which they were chosen, fixed by charter, within thirty days after Michaelmas.

*Constables.*

1680	John Simco	John Cottrill
1681	John Wallaxall	William Guest
1682	George Abel	Samuel White
1683	Thomas Russell	Abraham Spooner
1684	Roger Macham	William Wheely
1685	Thomas Cox	John Green
1686	Henry Porter	Samuel Carless
1687	Samuel Banner	John Jesson
1690	Joseph Robinson	John Birch
1691	John Rogers	Richard Leather
1692	Thomas Robins	Corbet Bushell
1693	Joseph Rann	William Sarjeant
1694	Rowland Hall	John Bryarly
1695	Richard Scott	George Wells
1696	Joseph Haddock	Robert Mansell
1697	James Greir	John Foster
1698	John Baker	Henry Camden
1699	William Kettle	Thomas Gisborn
1700	John Wilson	Joseph Allen
1701	Nicholas Bakewell	Richard Banner
1702	William Collins	Robert Groves
1703	Henry Parrott	Benjamin Carless
1704	William Brierly	John Hunt

1705	Jonathan Seeley	Thomas Holloway
1706	Robert Moore	John Savage
1707	Isaac Spooner	Samuel Hervey
1708	Richard Weston	Thomas Cope
1709	Samuel Walford	Thomas Green
1710	John Foxall	William Norton
1711	Stephen Newton	John Taylor
1712	William Russell	John Cotterell
1713	John Shaw	Thomas Hallford
1714	Randall Bradburn	Joseph May
1715	Stephen Newton	Samuel Russell
1716	Stephen Newton	Joseph Carless
1717	Abraham Foxall	William Spilsbury
1718	John Gisborn	Henry Carver
1719	Samuel Hays	Joseph Smith
1720	John Barnsley	John Humphrys
1721	William Bennett	Thomas Wilson
1722	John Harrison	Simon Harris

# A LIST OF THE HIGH BAILIFFS, LOW BAILIFFS, AND CONSTABLES,

*Of the Town of Birmingham, from 1732 to 1790.*

	High Bailiffs.	Low Bailiffs.	Constables.
1732	Thomas Wilson	John Webster	John Wilson
1733	John Webster	Joseph Kettle	James Baker
1734	John Wickins	Thomas Lakin	James Taylor
1735	Joseph Marston	John Russell	Thomas Ashfield
1736	Joseph Bradnock	Robert Moore	Joseph Fullelove
1737	James Baker	Isaac Ingram	Richard Porter
1738	Joseph Smith	William Mason	Henry Hunt
1739	Thomas Wickins	William Harvey	John England
1740	Simon Harris	Thomas Russell	T. Honeyborn
1741	Daniel Gill	George Abney	John Bedford
1742			

\* Joseph Scott, Esq. not choosing the official part, procured a substitute to perform it, in the person of the late constable James Baker.



1743	Josiah Jefferys	William Kettle	John Russell	Thomas Walker
1744	George Davies	J. Humphreys, Jun.	William Mason	William Ward
1745	Edward Burton	Robert Moore	Joseph Wollaston	John Turner
1746				
1747	Thomas Ashwell	J. Taylor, Esq.	Joseph Walker	Josiah Hunt
1748	Thomas Wickins	John Roe	Robert Moore	John Horton
1749	Joseph Fullelove	Richard Brett	Henry Hunt	Joseph Ruston
1750	Thomas Lakin	Joseph Smith	John Gill	Luke Bell
1751	Thomas Turner	Benj. Mansell	John Walters	W. Walsingham
1752	James Baker	John Taylor	Price Thomas	Joseph Thomas
1753	E. Jordan, Esq.	Samuel Harvey	Samuel Birch	Samuel Richards
1754	Thomas Cottrell	Joseph Richards	John Bellears	John Camden
1755	Joseph Walker	* John Wells	Stephen Colmore	John Powell
1756	John Bellears	J. Kettle, Esq.	Ambrose Foxall	John Gray
1757	William Patteson	Joseph Webster	J. Darbyshire	Richard Brett
1758	James Horton	T. Laurence	Thomas Richards	Sam. Pemberton
1759	John Walker	Thomas Abney	G. Spilsbury	Edward Weston

\* John Wells dying in office, Benjamin Mansell was chosen in his stead.

	High Bailiffs.	Low Bailiffs.	Constables.
1760	John Turner	Abel Humphreys	Web Marriot
1761	John Baskerville	Stephen Bedford	Nehemiah Bague
1762	Joseph Thomas	James Jackson	John Green
1763	John Gold	John Lee	John Daws
1764	Richard Hicks	J. Ryland	George Anderton
1765	Thomas Vallant	Samuel Richards	Elias Wallin
1766	John Lane	Henry Venour	Joseph Adams
1767	John Horn	J. Wilkinson	Thomas Carr
1768	Gregory Hicks	W. Russell, Esq.	John Moody
1769	James Male	Samuel Ray	William Mansell
1770	Joshua Glover	Thomas Russell	Thomas Barker
1771	John Harris	J. Hornblower	Walter Salt
1772	William Holden	J. Tyndall	T. Hunt
1773	Thomas Westley	John Richards	John Smart
1774	John Ward	John Francis	Thomas Wright
1775	Thomas Hurd	John Taylor, Esq.	T. Everton
1776	E. W. Patteson	Josiah Rogers	Joseph Wright
1777	Edward Thomason	S. Pemberton	Joseph Sheldon

1778	Joseph Green	William Hunt	Thomas Wright	* John Allen
1779	T. Faulconbridge	W. Humphrys	John Guest	Jonathan Wigley
1780	Daniel Winwood	William Scott	William Thomas	John Bird
1781	William Hicks	W. Taylor, Esq.	John Dallaway	Richard Porter
1782	Thomas Carless	G. Humphrys	John Holmes	Thomas Barrs
1783	William Ward	Thomas Colmore	Thomas Green	W. Wallis Mason
1784	Thomas Ingram	Benjamin May	Thomas Clowes	Charles Freeth
		Timothy Smith	{	
1785	Samuel Glover	John Rickards		Thomas Cooper
		Joseph Jukes		
1786	Samuel Ford	George Russell	John Green	Edward Bower
1787	Richard Conquest	Joseph Webster	{	Edward Bower
		Harry Hunt		
1788	Henry Clay, Esq.	Samuel Colmore	James Pickard	Thomas Green
1789	Joseph Guest	Charles Taylor	Joseph Fearon	John Wallis
1790	William Villers	Joseph Rogers	Joseph Fearon	John Wallis

\* John Allen declining the office, was charged with a fine of £25. by the lady of the manor, and John Miles chosen in his stead.

Five of the inhabitants have, since I knew the place, served the office of Sheriff for the County, viz.

John Taylor, Esq.	-	-	-	-	1756
Edward Jorden, Esq.	-	-	-	-	1757
Isaac Spooner Esq.	-	-	-	-	1763
John Taylor, Esq.	-	-	-	-	1786
Henry Clay, Esq.	-	-	-	-	1790

### *Court of Requests.*

Law is the very basis of civil society, without it man would quickly return to his original rudeness; the result would be robbery and blood;—and even laws themselves are of little moment, without a due execution of them—there is a necessity to annex punishment.

All wise legislators have endeavoured to proportion the punishment to the crime, but never to exceed it. A well conducted state holds forth a scale of punishments for transgressions of every dimension, beginning with the simple reprimand, and proceeding downwards even to death itself.

Much honour is due to that judicial luminary, William Murray, Earl of Mansfield, who presided over the King's Bench, for introducing equity into the courts of law, where she had long been a stranger.

From a consideration of the prodigious intercourse subsisting in so vast a body of people as those of Birmingham, it was wisely judged necessary to establish an easy and expeditious method of ending dispute, and securing property. The inhabitants, therefore, in 1752, procured an act for the recovery of debts under forty shillings; constituting seventy-two commissioners, three to be a quorum. They sat for the dispatch of business in the chamber over the Old Cross, till it was destroyed, every Friday morning.



There usually appears before them one hundred and sixty causes : their determinations are final. Two clerks, constituted by the act, attend the court to give judicial assistance ; are always of the law, chosen alternately by the lord of the manor and the commissioners, and continue for life. Once in every two years, ten of the commissioners are balloted out, and ten others of the inhabitants chosen in their stead.

*Lamp Act.*

Order is preserved by attention. In 1769 an act was obtained, and in 1773 and 1801 amendments of the act, for lighting and cleaning the streets of Birmingham, and for removing obstructions that were prejudicial to the health or convenience of the inhabitants.

In 1812 these three acts were repealed, and their provisions consolidated in a new act, which gave powers to the commissioners to purchase the Moat and Moat-house ; to erect a market for beasts, pigs, horses, hay, and straw ; reserving to the lord of the manor, the power to hold a market for horses, the Thursday of each of the fairs, in the street called the Horse Fair.

These acts were committed to the care of about seventy-six irresolute commissioners, with farther powers of preventing encroachments upon public ground ; for it was justly observed, that robbery was a work of darkness, therefore to introduce light would, in some measure, protect property. That in a town like Birmingham, full of commerce and inhabitants, where necessity leads to continual action, no part of the twenty-four hours ought to be dark. That, to avoid darkness, is sometimes to avoid insult ; and that by the light of seven hundred lamps, many unfortunate accidents would be prevented. It was also observed, that in a course of time, the buildings in some of

the ancient streets had encroached upon the path four or five feet on each side ; which caused an irregular line, and made those streets eight or ten feet narrower, that are now used by seventy thousand people, than they were when used only by a tenth part of that number ; and, that their confined width rendered the passage dangerous to children, women, and feeble age, particularly on the market day and Saturday evening. That if former encroachments could not be recovered, future ought to be prevented : And that necessity pleads for a wider street now than heretofore, not only because the inhabitants being more numerous, require more room, but the buildings being more elevated, obstruct the light, the sun, and the air, which obstructions tend to sickness and inconveniency.

Narrow streets with modern buildings, are generally dirty, for want of these natural helps ; as Digbeth, St. Martin's Lane, Swan Alley, Carr's Lane, &c. The narrower the street, the less it can be influenced by the sun and the wind, consequently the more the dirt will abound ; and by experimental observations upon stagnate water in the street, it is found extremely prejudicial to health. And also, the larger the number of people, the more the necessity to watch over their interest with a guardian's eye.

It may farther be remarked, that an act of parliament ought to distribute justice with an impartial hand, in which case, content and obedience may reasonably be expected. But the acts before us carry a manifest partiality, one man claims a right to an encroachment into the street of three or four feet, whilst another is proscribed to twelve inches.

This inactive body of seventy-six, who wisely argue against the annihilation of one evil, because another will remain, had powers to borrow a thousand pounds, to purchase and remove some obstructive buildings, and to defray the expense by a rate on the inhabitants, which

after deducting about one hundred and twenty pounds per annum for deficiencies, amounted in

1774,	-	-	to	-	-	£ 912
1775,	-	-	—	-	-	902
1776,	-	-	—	-	-	947
1777,	-	-	—	-	-	965
1778,	-	-	—	-	-	1,012
1779,	-	-	—	-	-	1,022
1780,	-	-	—	-	-	1,021
1785,	-	-	—	-	-	1,256
1786,	-	-	—	-	-	1,253
1787,	-	-	—	-	-	1,265
1788,	-	-	—	-	-	1,276
1789,	-	-	—	-	-	1,315
1790,	-	-	—	-	-	1,301

Though the town was averse to the measure, as an innovation, they quickly saw its utility, and seemed to wish a more vigorous exertion of the commissioners; but numbers sometimes procrastinate intentions. If it is difficult to find five men of one mind, it is more difficult to find a superior number. That business which would run currently through the hands of five, stagnates at fifteen, the number required.

It is curious to observe a body of commissioners, every one of whom conducts his own private affairs with propriety and success, attack a question by the hour, which is as plain as the simplest proposition in the mathematics, when not being able to reduce it, and their ammunition spent, leave the matter undetermined, and retreat in silence. In works of manual operation a large number may be necessary, but in works of direction a small one facilitates dispatch.

Birmingham, a capacious field, by long neglect is overgrown with encroaching weeds. The gentle commissioners,

appointed to reduce them, behold it an arduous work, are divided in opinion, and some withdraw the hand from the plough. The manorial powers, which alone could preserve order, have slept for ages. Regularity has been long extinct. The desire of trespass is so prevalent, that I have been tempted to question, if it were not for the powers of the Lamp Act, feeble as they are, whether the many-headed-public, ever watchful of prey, would not, in another century, devour whole streets, and totally prevent the passenger. Thus a supine jurisdiction abounds with *street-robbers*.

If the sleepy powers of the lord made any efforts, those efforts operated to the injury of the streets, by taking encroachments into pay. If simple mischief is prejudicial, what then must be that mischief which is countenanced by power!—We learn from modern records, that

	per annum.	
	s.	d.
Charles Soul held a passage from the street to a vault, at	5	0
Andrew Adams, a flight of steps	2	6
William Butler, for a vault and a shed	7	6
Richard Lutwyche, a vault and sashes	7	6
Richard Wakefield, steps and sashes	7	6
Isaac Baker, for leave to lay down coals	7	6
Thomas Everett, a passage to a vault	5	0

These tresspasses, with many others, were presented to the lord by his own jury; but the encroacher checked their proceedings by a silver bar, and continued possession.

There are cases where the line of the street should inviolably be preserved, as in a common range of houses; therefore all projections above a given dimension infringe this rule. There are other cases where *taste* would direct this line to be broken, as in buildings of singular size or construction, which should be viewed in recess. Those of a public nature generally come under this description,



as the Free School and the Hotel, which ought to have fallen two or three yards back. What pity, that so noble an edifice as the Theatre in New Street, should lose any of its beauty, by the prominence of its situation?

As Birmingham abounds with new streets, that were once private property, it is a question often discussed, in what point of time the land appropriated for such streets, ceases to be private? But as this question was never determined, and as it naturally rises before me, and is of importance, suffer me to examine it. When building leases are granted, if the road be narrow, as was lately the case at the west end of New Street, the proprietor engages to give a certain portion of land to widen it. From that moment it falls to the lot of the public, and is under the control of the commissioners, as guardians of public property. I allow, if within memory, the granter and the lessees should agree to cancel the leases, which is just as likely to happen as the powers of attraction to cease, and the moon to descend from the heavens, the land reverts again to its original proprietor.

Though the streets of Birmingham have for many ages been exposed to the hand of the encroacher, yet, by a little care, and less expense, they might in about one century be reduced to a considerable degree of use and beauty. In what light then shall we be viewed by the future eye, if we neglect the interest of posterity?

#### *Humane Society.*

The benevolent spirit of the inhabitants, established in 1790, the Humane Society, for the recovery of drowned persons.

#### *Commercial Committee.*

A Commercial Committee, consisting of the first characters, was also instituted to watch over the common interests of the place.

*Hay Market.*

In 1791, a market was opened every Tuesday, to supply the town with hay, &c.

*Public Library.*

The benefit of *letters* is ascertained by comparing the practice of the fifteenth century with the present. Then, even the man of reflection, for want of this valuable resource, might *think* himself into a dose, by his fire-side, and slumber away half his night's rest before bed-time. No magazines for mental subsistence, were preserved in that barren period. His mind, starved and unemployed, sunk into inaction ; instead of knowing what appertained to others, he did not know himself ; the past and the future were hid from his eyes, and his utmost stretch of acquirement comprehended only a small part of his day, aided by a narrow tradition. The result was darkness, slavery, ignorance, prejudice, poverty of substance and of thought, bigotry, and superstition. Neither could he draw intelligence from others, for their literary fountains were as dry as his own ; his manners were as savage as his judgment was erroneous. But the man of the present century becomes heir to immense treasures. The generations which are past, as well as that present, have stored up more amusement than he can grasp. The collection of ages lie open to view ; he beholds things which are past as if they were present ; lights up his dark mind at the constellation of luminaries. Before him expands a capacious garden, rich in culture, where he can gather what flowers he pleases. Here he tastes the tree of knowledge without danger. Solitude no longer disgusts, for should he lose his company, he cannot lose himself. He commands the living and the dead ; what they acquired he possesses. So far from dozing away the day, he can

scarcely spare night for sleep. The results of the press are juster ideas, a refinement of taste and of judgment, advances in civilization, the introduction of wealth, light, and freedom. Anciently, the man who understood the alphabet, was a conjurer, but now he may understand something more, and be reputed a blockhead.

The Public Library of Birmingham, commenced in 1779, and, like many important things, from exceedingly minute beginnings. Each member paid a guinea entrance, and six shillings per annum. Their number was so small, that they could scarcely have quarrelled had they been inclined, and their whole stock might have been hid in a handkerchief. The society received, from the benevolent hand of Dr. Priestley, in 1782, that stability and method, without which no institution can prosper. In 1781, the subscription was raised to eight shillings.—A librarian then entered the service at £10 per annum. In 1786, admission was advanced to £1 11s. 6d. and an order made, that when the subscribers amounted to three hundred, it should be two guineas; and when four hundred, three guineas, which is the present case. Twenty-five pounds per annum is paid for a room, and thirty guineas to a Librarian for superintending a stock of four thousand volumes.

The medical gentlemen, in 1790, formed themselves into a Book Society, for purchasing the publications of their science. Book Societies are now very common and Circulating Libraries very numerous.

### *Public Education.*

Amongst the numerous and important events which crowded upon the close of the eighteenth century, there was not one perhaps of more consequence, as it regards the future well being of the human race, than the establishment of Sunday Schools. Whether we consider the simplicity of the plan, the rapidity of its operation, or its extraordi-

nary results, it is cheering to the heart of philanthropy to feel how well it merits this unqualified praise.—Before that period, education was more a matter of speculation than of practice; individual improvement was promoted by the parties interested, but what advances had been made towards enlightening the public mind? Experience had lamentably proved how inadequate were the public schools to produce any sensible effect, whether founded by royal donations or individual munificence; and our late parliamentary reports attest, alas! but too plainly, that venality and corruption had monopolized the resources which benevolence or ostentation had intended for a different use. Nor can any reasonable palliation be urged in favour of that class of the community whose office and emoluments had such powerful claims upon them, to devote their time and their influence in endeavouring to improve the morals of the great bulk of society by instruction. It was notoriously the dread of a large proportion of them, as was fully evinced by their zealous opposition to the attempt that was now made to start the subject on a national scale. Such were the facts when Robert Raikes, of Gloucester, first conceived the idea, and reduced it to practice, of a plan which recommending itself to the public patronage by its simplicity, its economy, and its universality, should have no limits but the want of more subjects on whom to confer the benefit. The year 1781, was the memorable epoch of this god-like suggestion; and the success with which the first efforts were crowned, soon induced its adoption in various parts of the kingdom; and Birmingham has the honour not only of being one of the first, but also unquestionably the most persevering and successful, in this competition of zeal and benevolence. In 1787, the dissenters, who hitherto had made common cause in the undertaking, requested permission to take the pupils of their own recommending, to their own respective places of worship, holding them-



selves responsible for their punctual attendance. This reasonable indulgence was however denied them by the general committee, (with the casting vote of the Rev. Chairman,) and the consequence was the immediate secession of the whole party, and their establishment on their own foundation. The Old and New Meeting Societies thus commenced their school, in 1787, on the same footing as had generally been adopted,—that of such a number of children as could be accommodated in the dwelling of a salaried teacher, with the appointment of monthly visitors in rotation, as superintendants and reporters to the committee. The majestic river has its origin in the bubbling rivulet, and the venerable and towering oak in the diminutive acorn ;—so in this case—it was one of the first resolutions of the Old Meeting Committee, (though somewhat bordering on the ludicrous) “That the number of children be limited to twenty.” The children were to be taught to read and to repeat their catechism, and then to be dismissed, with the present of a Bible, to make room for new comers. A few of the visitors soon, however, began to feel the imperfection of the plan, and instead of these dismissals, they used their influence in procuring larger premises, and thus improved their feelings in the cause, by increasing their attachment to the children, and their responsibility to the managers. After a while, the question was started,—why dismiss the children at all? and why not extend the advantages of the institution, so as to watch over the formation and growth of their character, as they advance to meet the trials and temptations of youthful exposure? Following up these suggestions, some of the visitors in connexion with both establishments, decided, in 1789, upon opening a new undertaking, under the denomination of the “Sunday Society,” whose objects should be to embody those youths who had been honourably dismissed from other schools, and to carry on the instructions

in the plain and elementary principles of useful science. The public may not deem these worthies undeserving of this lasting record, and the names of James Luckcock, Thomas Wright Hill, Thomas Clark, Thomas Halliday, Philip and Thomas Carpenter, and Michael Beasely, will be valued as belonging to the principals in their patriotic designs. To defray their expenses, they commenced a Public Weekly Debating Society, in the large room which they occupied on Sundays as their school. The subjects for debate, were generally such as had some bearing upon the main question of public improvement ; and they charged an admission fee of sixpence. Their successful efforts and flattering prospects were, however, suspended and apparently overwhelmed by the disgraceful riots of 1791. Fanaticism would admit of no compromise, and its temporary triumph was complete. The dissenters felt the necessity of yielding to the howling tempest, but as the alarm subsided, they became more than ever convinced of the importance of the task they had undertaken, and once more setting their hands to the plough, are now reaping a rich and abundant harvest, as their gratifying reward. The same association of managers, had so far improved and enlarged their plans, as to embody themselves with their newly-appointed assistants, into a society, in 1796, under the title of the “ Old and New Meeting Brotherly Society,” whose objects were to rear a succession of voluntary and gratuitous teachers from their own pupils ; thus attempting to organize a new, intellectual, and moral society, and establish the whole upon a respectable and self-perpetuating foundation. The following is one of the rules they adopted, and it will not only explain their motives, but evince the near resemblance the institution held to that of the present Mechanics’ Institutions ; or still more, may be considered as the first public suggestion of that important measure.—“ The subjects for improvement shall be reading, writing, arithmetic, drawing,

geography, natural and civil history, and morals; or, in short, whatever may be generally useful to a manufacturer, or as furnishing principles for active benevolence and integrity. And every member on enrolling his name, was required to sign the following declaration.—“Such being the leading motives for our association, we pledge ourselves to each other to endeavour to carry them into effect, and to make ourselves as useful as we can. We engage to behave with civility and respect to each other, to consider each other as desirable companions, and as brothers; to go hand in hand in our improvements and amusements, and to study each other’s welfare and happiness. We will avoid all levity, or trifling, unmanly, behaviour; all finery and foppishness in our dress; all bad company and gaming. We will consider industry in our callings as an indispensable duty, and obedience to parents and masters as not less necessary and binding. We will love and cultivate honesty and truth, and will be careful that our general conduct shall correspond with our professions, so as to gain the confidence of our friends, and merit the esteem of all who know us. With these sincere and good intentions, we subscribe our names to the following rules.”

In the year 1798, a most valuable addition was made to the regulations of the institution, by the adoption of a sick club, at first, intended for the children only, belonging to the school, but afterwards, extended to the teachers. The success of this has been unprecedented and surprising, as the following statement will amply testify:—

	£.	s.	d.		£.	s.	d.
Subscriptions from the commencement, to the close of the year				Sick Payments	876	2	10
1833 -	1754	0	10 $\frac{1}{2}$	Contingencies -	119	0	2
Interest on Capital. -	607	3	11	Balance Fund realised	1366	1	9 $\frac{1}{2}$
					<hr/>		
	<hr/>				£2361	4	9 $\frac{1}{2}$
	£2360	4	9 $\frac{1}{2}$		<hr/>		

Much of this success is owing to the whole management being gratuitous, and no payment for the use of any room or office, the collections and distributions being regulated entirely by the teachers themselves, and without any pecuniary reward. The number of subscribers may have averaged from two hundred to two hundred and fifty, and the last year was in the following proportions :—

Subscriptions per Week.	No. of Subscribers.	Rate of Payments for Illness, per Week.	
		<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Halfpenny - -	87	2	0
One Penny - -	120	4	0
Three-halfpence -	13	—	
Twopence - -	12	6	0
Threepence - -	7	9	0
Fourpence - -	48	12	0
Honorary - -	6		
Total - -	293		

On the decease of any member under twenty-one years of age, an allowance is made from the fund, for his funeral, after the rate of four weekly payments for illness ; and for a senior member, two pounds, whatever his receipts may have been ; but every senior member, in such case, must contribute one shilling, to the fund. As a statistical fact it deserves record, that in the first thirty-two years, there were only twenty-seven deaths, in 1808, 1809, and 1810, none, in 1818, 1819, and 1820, none, and in 1826, to 1830, inclusive, only two.

This detail is by no means intended to undervalue the merits of the other dissenting societies in the town, but to place on record the well deserved claim to originality of these united societies in the scheme of perpetuating the schools from their own supply, and connecting the sick club with



the institution. The Wesleyan Methodists, the Baptists, and the Independents are entitled to their full share of national and universal praise for their ardent and successful exertions in this new field of mental cultivation. The acknowledged superiority, and efficiency of the plan which soon began to engage the public attention, induced the appointment of many deputations to gain information as to the modes adopted—and these applications were always met with attention and courtesy, and with the true spirit of liberal feeling which the good cause required. It would seem that the Society of Friends have hardly borne a proportionate share in the great work of public instruction—it must however be conceded that they took the lead in establishing and patronizing the Lancasterian Institution; and the Infant Schools are perhaps more indebted to them as a body, than to any other denomination. It would be superfluous on this occasion to enter minutely into the detail of the arrangements adopted in the respective schools, either as to the matter or manner of instruction, or as to their comparative expenses. Many of them, however, have very ample and commodious buildings erected for the purpose, at an expense from £500 to £1000—some entirely from donations, and others in part from the funds of the trustees connected with their places of worship. One or two instances may serve to exemplify the general system, and probable conclusions may suffice for the rest. The New Meeting Schools (1810) cost, including the purchase of the land, £1425—the donations, chiefly from the society, amounted to £623—and subsequent subscriptions, together with the produce from the annual services, and the income arising from weekly tenants, have since then entirely supported the schools, and liquidated the whole of the loans they have contracted. The Old Meeting Schools were erected 1820, on an estimate of £1000, on land belonging to the trustees—the materials from old building were taken at £250 and

the congregation raised a voluntary subscription of £200. The average annual expense of each pupil in the Old and New Meeting Schools, including some payments to female teachers, rewards, fuel, &c. may be taken at 2s. 2d. per head—and as the system of gratuitous instruction is now pretty general among dissenters, and the Wesleyans in particular being close managers in point of economy, it may be considered as a fair presumption that the same estimate will approximate sufficiently near to serve as an average supposition for the whole—There is no need however, to underrate it to make out a plausible case—if we say 2s. 6d. instead of 2s. 2d. per head, on the total number, 14,000 it will amount to £1,750—and if for a round sum we take it at £2,000 it will make but about 2s. per house throughout the town, or not one halfpenny per week.—This must be understood for instruction solely, several of the institutions in the list providing subsistence in addition—Such is the amazing power of well-directed combination !

From a calculation made in one of the most numerous schools, the average number of absentees may be taken at one seventh, and the change of the pupils takes place totally in about three years and a half, so that making allowance for the fickle and restless subjects who are constantly shifting, the steady ones may be supposed to remain about four years and a half. And this seems to be corroborated by the universal change in the population ; as it embraces a period of childhood, till about the age of fourteen, or what may be called the age for school. And thus rolls on the rapid and incessant tide of human existence—Taking the population of the town 100,000—at five persons to a house will make twenty thousand houses—and of these five persons one in each family may be supposed at the school age, from seven to fourteen. This cannot be very wide of the mark, and it would thus appear that there are fourteen thousand instructed in the public institutions

towards the total of twenty thousand—and of the remaining six thousand, we may fairly reckon four thousand for those who belonging to a higher class, have their education paid for by their parents, and there will then remain two thousand the victims of ignorance and neglect. This considered in itself is a serious number, but in comparison with the total is consolatory, being but a tenth part of the whole; and even a considerable portion of these may fall in the way occasionally for some little help in the cultivation of their untutored minds. And how gratifying to the benevolent heart to reflect and to feel with confidence, that during the last twenty-five years no individual whatever can say with truth—“ I have sought instruction and could not obtain it”—On the memorable occasion of the half century of Sunday School establishment, and on the birthday of Raikes, September 14, 1831—all religious denominations of the town gladly concurred in the measure proposed of making it a day of jubilee and of public happiness.—The pupils were all assembled and paraded to their respective places of worship, where preparations had been made for the purpose; and after joining their voices in praise to God and gratitude to their benefactors, were most of them treated with suitable refreshment, and sent home highly delighted—What a proud day was this for humanity!—Minds illuminated instead of windows—the anthem of praise in our various chapels instead of the yells of the deluded multitude rejoicing in human slaughter—and the hearts of old and young, rich and poor, benefactors and recipients, all softened to every generous impulse that must eventually increase the sum of human felicity.

In accordance with the spirit of the day, the Brotherly Society presented to Mr. James Luckcock a medal of fine gold, and weighing from two to three ounces, containing an excellent likeness of himself, by Halliday, with the inscriptions :

“ James Luckcock, born October 24, 1761, Father of Sunday School instruction in Birmingham.”

And on the reverse side—

“ To the author of “ Moral Culture”—this medal is presented by his friends and admirers, as a record of their esteem for his successful exertions in the Old and New Meeting Sunday Schools, from their commencement to the present time.

Year of Jubilee, 1831—Sunday Schools’ first jubilee celebrated September 14, 1831—being the anniversary of Raikes’s birthday, the founder of them.”

Another reverse die was prepared, with the following inscriptions :

“ Sunday School Jubilee, Sept. 14, 1831.

Old and New Meeting Sunday Schools established 1787.

One thousand three hundred and sixty-four pupils in the schools.

One hundred and fifty gratuitous teachers.

Fourteen thousand, five hundred pupils in the town.”

And with this alteration, medals were struck in white metal, and presented in handsome morocco cases to all the members, in perpetual acknowledgment that without their zealous and unremitted co-operation, the plans so well matured could never have been realized.

With these broad and demonstrated facts, it may be easily assumed that no town in the kingdom, perhaps not in the world, possesses more advantages for the attainment of moral and intellectual improvement. For the honour then, of public education, may Birmingham continue its progress in that honourable path which it appears to have chosen for the accomplishment of its destinies. May increasing good conduct attend upon, and prove the soundness of the principles which have been inculcated through all the ramifications of the different schools; and may union, diligence, temperance, frugality, subordination, domestic habits, and public virtue, be so eminently conspicuous, as not merely to prove that good order and universal education are compatible, but that they must be ne-



cessarily united, as the only solid foundation on which to erect the fabric of universal happiness.

*Statement of Public Education,*

(From an Actual Census, December, 1827.)

		Boys.	Girls.	Total.
Blue Coat School	-	148	46	194
Infant ditto, Ann Street	-	80	70	150
Ditto Islington	-	55	50	105
Asylum, (from the parish-rates)	-	130	135	265
National Schools	-	272	170	442
Schools of Industry	-	—	154	154
St. Philip's	-	100	100	
St. George's	-	140	80	
St. Mary's	-	160	190	
St. Martin's	-	112	123	
St. Paul's	-	80	20	
Christ Church	-	150	187	
St. Bartholomew's	} Schools merging in the Total.			
St. James				
St. John's				
Trinity Church	-	—	—	2130
Park Street School	-	—	48	48
New Meeting ditto	-	540	200	740
Old Meeting ditto	-	441	109	550
Cannon Street Schools	} Baptist and Independent Sunday School Union.			
Carr's Lane ditto				
Ebenezer ditto				
Fisher Street ditto				
Livery Street ditto				6000
Bond Street ditto				
New Hall Street ditto				
King Street ditto				
Lombard Street ditto				
Oxford Street ditto		2408	1682	—
Carried Forward				10,778

	Brought Forward	Boys. 2408	Girls. 1682	Total. 10,778
Cherry Street, Belmont Row	} Wesleyan Old Schools			1600
Wesleyan New Schools	- -	491	310	801
Bradford Street ditto	- -	160	200	360
Mount Zion ditto	- -	30	20	50
Islington ditto	- -	—	—	100
Thorpe Street ditto	- -	—	—	80
Inge Street ditto	- -	—	—	80
Roman Catholic ditto	- -	—	—	250
Total	- -	3089	2212	14,099

### *Religion and Politics.*

Although these two threads, like the warp and the woof, are very distinct things, yet, like them, they are usually woven together. Each possesses a strength of its own, but when united, become extremely powerful, as in the case of Henry the III., and the clergy. This union subsisted from a very early date.

Power is the idol of man ; we not only wish to acquire it, but also to increase and preserve it. If the magistrate has been too weak to execute his designs, he has backed his schemes with the aid of the church. This occurred with King Stephen and the bishops.

Likewise, if a churchman finds his power ascendant in the human mind, he still wishes an addition to that power, by uniting another. Thus the bishop of Rome, being master of the spiritual chair, stepped also into the temporal.

Sometimes the ecclesiastical and civil governors appear in the malign aspect, or in modern phrase, like a quarrel between the squire and the rector, which is seldom detri-

mental to the people. This was the case with Henry the VIII. and the church.

Birmingham, in those remote periods, does not seem to have attended so much to religious and political dispute, as the coarse music of her hammer. Peace seems to have been her characteristic—she paid obedience to that prince who had good fortune to possess the throne, and regularly paid divine honours in St. Martin's, because there was no other church. Thus, through the long ages of Saxon, Danish, and Norman Government, we hear of no noise but that of the anvil, till the reign of Henry the III., when her lord joined the barons against the crown, and drew after him some of his mechanics, to exercise the very arms they had been taught to make ; at the battle of Evesham, he staked his life and his fortune, and lost both.

Things quickly returning into their former channel, she stood a silent spectator during that dreadful contest between the two roses, pursuing the tenor of still life till the civil wars of Charles the I., when she took part with the parliament ; some of whose troops were stationed here, particularly at the garrison and Camphill ; the names of both originating in that circumstance. (*See page 37.*)

In 1660, she joined the wish of the kingdom in the restoration of the Stuart family. About this time, many of the curious manufacturers began to blossom in this prosperous garden of the arts.

In 1688, when the nation chose to expel a race of kings, though replete with good nature, because they had forgot the limits of justice ; our peaceable sons of art wisely considering that oppression and commerce, like oil and water, could never unite, smiled, with the rest of the kingdom, at the landing of the Prince of Orange, and exerted their little assistance towards effecting the revolution, notwithstanding the lessons of *divine right* had been taught near ninety years.

In the reign of Queen Anne, when that flaming luminary, Dr. Sacheverel, set half the kingdom in a blaze, the inhabitants of this region of industry caught the spark of the day and grew warm for the church. They had always been inured to *fire*, but now we behold them between *two*. As the doctor rode in triumph through the streets of Birmingham (1709), this flimsy idol of party snuffed up the incense of the populace, but the more sensible withheld their homage ; and when he preached at Sutton Coldfield, where he had family connexions, the people of Birmingham crowded in multitudes round his pulpit. But it does not appear that he taught his hearers to *build up Zion*, but perhaps to pull her down ; for they immediately went and gutted a meeting-house.

In 1715, so great was the fury of the uneducated populace of this town, that several meeting-houses were either totally destroyed or much injured. July, 1791, these same lovers of the church, and loyal subjects of his majesty, committed much greater excesses against their peaceable brethren, the dissenters. Public prosecution, and private persecution were aided by the firebrand of a lawless mob, to prevent the spread of civil and religious liberty. But the improvement of the people by education, since 1791, and the consequent increase of liberal sentiments, has caused a reaction. The people now think and act in concert for their general good ; and the dissenters, with unceasing assiduity and calm determination, with no weapon but reason and the justice of their cause, completely triumphed in 1832. (*See page 86.*) Notwithstanding the signal defeat at this period, in November, 1834, notice was again given that a meeting would be held in the Town-Hall, to grant a rate of fourpence in the pound. One of the largest and most respectable meetings, upon this subject, was consequently held, December 5th, 1834, more than eight thousand persons being present. Both







Engraved by J. Wright

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY,

BIRMINGHAM

Published by James Frost, Steelhouse Lane.

1835

parties had come prepared to defend themselves and their cause to the utmost. The show of hands being greatly against the rate, a *poll* was demanded, which was carried on with great spirit for seven days. The excitement during this time was as great as any contested election. The poll finally closed, December 13th, 1834, when the numbers were for the rate one thousand seven hundred and twenty-three, against it, six thousand six hundred and ninety-nine. This, it is hoped, will be sufficient to set the matter at rest for ever.

Easter dues, which used to be paid with cheerfulness, have not, for many years, paid the expenses of collection; and the rector has shewn his good sense by suffering his claim to slumber in obscurity.

### *Places of Worship.*

In a town like Birmingham, unfettered with chartered laws, which gives access to the stranger of every denomination, for he here finds a freedom by birth-right; and where the principles of toleration are well understood, it is no wonder we find various modes of worship. There are forty-five places of worship in Birmingham, thirteen belonging to the Established Church, and thirty-two to the various sects of Protestant Dissenters and others.

### *Saint Martin's.*

It has been remarked, that the antiquity of this church is too remote for historical light. The curious records of those dark ages, not being multiplied and preserved by the art of printing, have fallen a prey to time and the revolution of things. There is reason for fixing the foundation in the eighth century, perhaps rather sooner, and it then was at a small distance from the buildings. The town stood upon the hill, whose centre was the Old Cross.

I am inclined to think that the precincts of St. Martin's have undergone a mutilation, and that the place which has obtained the modern name of Bull Ring, and which is used as a market for corn and herbs, was once an appropriation of the church, though not used for interment; because the church is evidently calculated for a town of some size, to which the present church-yard no way agrees, being so extremely small that the ancient dead must have been continually disturbed, to make way for the modern, that little spot being their only receptacle for nine hundred years. A son not only succeeded his father in the possession of his property and habitation, but also in the grave, where he could scarcely enter without expelling half a dozen of his ancestors.

The antiquity of St. Martin's will appear by surveying the adjacent ground. From the eminence upon which the High Street stands, proceeds a steep and regular descent into Moor Street, Digbeth, down Spiceal Street, Lee's Lane, and Worcester Street. This descent is broken only by the church yard, which, through a long course of interment for ages, is augmented into a considerable hill, chiefly composed of the refuse of life. We may, therefore, safely remark, in this place, *the dead are raised up*. Nor shall we be surprised at the rapid growth of the hill, when we consider this little point of land was alone that hungry grave which devoured the whole of the inhabitants, during the long ages of existence, till the year 1715, when St. Philip's was opened. The curious observer will easily discover the fabric has lost that symmetry which should ever attend architecture, by the growth of the soil about it, causing a low appearance in the building, so that instead of the church burying the dead, the dead would, in time, have buried the church. It is reasonable to allow, that the original approach into this place was by a flight of steps, not by a descent, as is the present case; and that



the church yard was surrounded by a low wall. As the ground swelled by the accumulation of the dead, wall after wall was added to support the growing soil. Thus the fence and the hill sprang up together; this was demonstrated, August 27, 1781, when, in removing two or three old houses, to widen St. Martin's Lane, they took down the church-yard wall, which was fifteen feet high without, and three within. This proved to be only an outward case that covered another wall twelve feet high; in the front of which was a stone, elevated eight feet, and inscribed, "Robert Dallaway, Francis Burton, church-wardens, anno dom. (supposed) 1310." As there is certain evidence that the church is much older than the above date, we should suspect there had been another fence many ages prior to this. But it was put beyond a doubt, when the workmen came to a third wall, four feet high, covered with antique coping, probably erected with the fabric itself, which would lead us far back into the Saxon times.

The removal of the buildings to accommodate the street, the construction of the wall, beautified with pallisades, is *half* an elegant plan, well executed. If we can persuade ourselves to perform the other half, by removing the remainder of the buildings, and continuing the line to the steps at the bottom of Spiceal Street, the work will stand in the front of modern improvement.

This suggestion was carried out by the authority of an Act of Parliament, granted in 1807. The remainder of the buildings adjoining the church-yard were removed, and two and a half acres of land in Park Street were purchased for a cemetery. The whole cost £7,600. An annual levy was granted, to defray this expense, for many years. Many thousands of pounds were collected more than the original cost, and still a debt of £6000 remained unpaid. The people who had slumbered on this *job*, for

twenty years, were at length aroused and determined to pay no more, and the creditors were obliged to apply to the parliament for assistance. After considerable opposition, the debt was allowed to be liquidated from the Poor Rates, by annual instalments. Two of the persons who successfully opposed and exposed this job, were Mr. G. Edmonds and Mr. J. Russell.

As the country does not produce stone of a lasting texture, and as the rough blasts of nine hundred years had made inroads upon the fabric, it was thought necessary, in 1690, to case both church and steeple with brick, except the spire, which is an elegant one. The bricks and the workmanship are excellent.

The steeple has, within memory, been three times injured by lightning. Forty feet of the spire, in a decayed state, was taken down and rebuilt in 1781, with stone from Attleborough, near Nuneaton; and strengthened by a spindle of iron, running up its centre one hundred and five feet long, secured to the side walls every ten feet by braces—the expense, £165 16s.

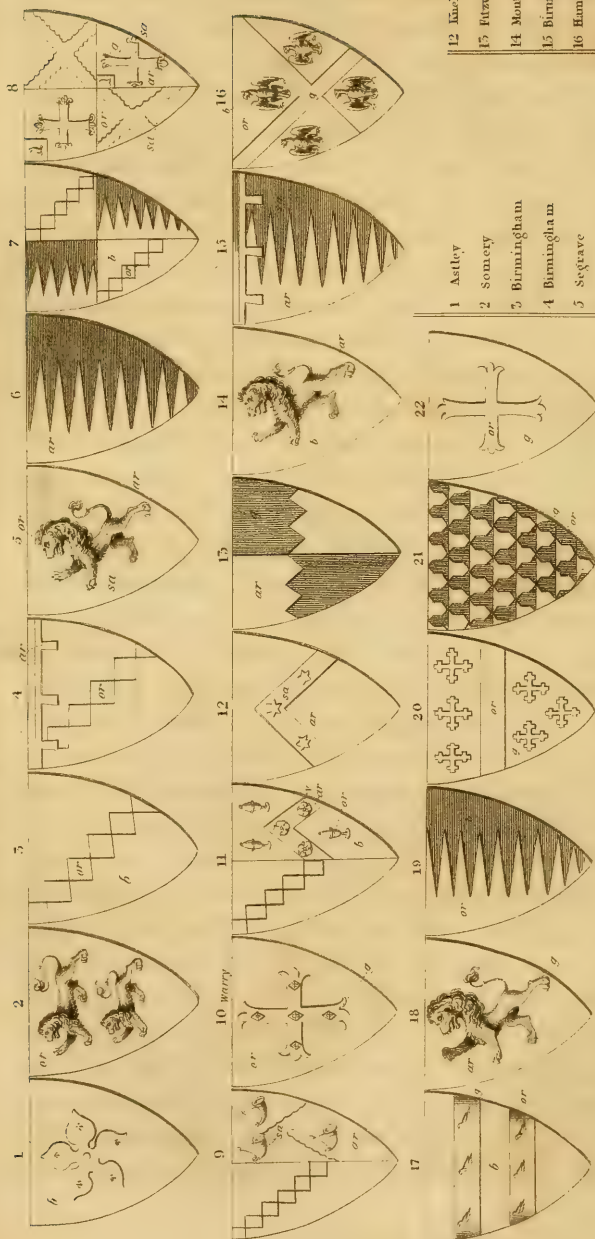
Inclosed is a ring of twelve musical bells, and though I am not master of the bob-major and tripple-grandsire, yet am well informed the ringers are masters of the bell-rope; but to excel in Birmingham is not new.

The seats in the church would have disgraced a meaner parish than that of Birmingham; one would be tempted to think, they were the first ever erected upon the spot, without taste or order; the timber was become hard with age, and to the honour of the inhabitants, bright with use. Each sitting was a private freehold, and was farther disgraced, like the coffin of a pauper, with the paltry initials of the owner's name. These divine abodes were secured with the coarse padlocks of a field gate.

By an attentive survey of the seats, we plainly discover the increasing population of Birmingham. When the



# ARMS IN A WINDOW AT ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH, A.D. 1640.



- |                                   |                           |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Astley                          | 12 Lich                   |
| 2 Somery                          | 15 Fitzwarren             |
| 3 Birmingham                      | 14 Mottall                |
| 4 Birmingham                      | 15 Birmingham             |
| 5 Seave                           | 16 Hampden                |
| 6 Birmingham                      | 17 Burdett                |
| 7 Birmingham quatering Birmingham | 18 Mottall                |
| 8 Feshale quatering Eborford      | 19 Edgaston               |
| 9 Birmingham impaling Wirley      | 20 Beauchamp E of Warwick |
| 10 Fevile                         | 21 Fevers                 |
| 11 Birmingham impaling            | 22 Latimer                |

Published by James Gresh, Steelhouse Lane, Birmingham



church was erected, there was doubtless sufficient room for the inhabitants, and it was probably the only place for public worship during eight hundred years. As the town increased, gallery after gallery was erected, till no conveniency was found for more. Invention was afterwards exerted to augment the number of sittings; every recess capable only of admitting the body of an infant, was converted into a seat, which indicates the continual increase of people, and that a spirit of devotion was prevalent among them.

The floor of the church was greatly injured by interment, as also the light, by the near approach of the buildings, notwithstanding, in 1733, the middle roof of the chancel was taken off, and the side walls raised about nine feet, to admit a double range of windows.

Dugdale, who wrote in 1640, gives us twenty-two drawings of the arms, in the windows, of those gentry who had connexion with Birmingham.

1 Astley	10 Freville
2 Someri	11 Ancient Birmingham
3 Ancient Birmingham	12 Knell
4 Ancient Birmingham, the second house	13 Fitz-Warrer
5 Seagrave	14 Montalt
6 Modern Birmingham	15 Modern Birmingham
7 Ancient and modern Bir- mingham quartered	16 Hampden
8 Peshale quartering Botte- tort	17 Burdet
9 Birmingham quartering Wyrley	18 Montalt
	19 Modern Birmingham
	20 Beauchamp
	21 Ferrers
	22 Latimere

These twenty-two coats are now reduced to three, which are,

Number two, in the east window of the chancel, *or, two lions passant azure*, the arms of the family of Someri,

Lords of Dudley Castle, and superior Lords of Birmingham ; which having been extinct about four hundred and fifty years, the coat of arms must have been there at least during that period.

Number three, in the south window of the chancel, *azure, a bend lozenge of five points, or*, the ancient arms of the family of Birmingham, which perhaps is upwards of four hundred years old, as that coat was not used after the days of Edward the I., except in quarterings.

And number ten, in the north window, *or, a cross indented gules ; also, five fleurs de lis*, the ancient arms of Freville, Lords of Tamworth, whose ancestor, Marmion, received a grant of that castle from William the Conqueror, and whose descendant, Lord Viscount Townshend, is the present proprietor. Perhaps this coat hath been there four hundred years, for the male line of the Freville family was extinct in the reign of Henry the IV.

Under the south window of the chancel, by the door, were two monuments abreast, of white marble, much injured by the rude hand of time, and more by that of the ruder boys. The left figure which is very ancient, I take to be William de Birmingham, who was made prisoner by the French at the siege of Bellegard, in the 25th of Edward the I., 1297. He wears a short mantle, which was the dress of that time, a sword, expressive of the military order, and he also bears a shield with the bend lozenge, which seems never to have been borne after the above date. He was a crusader, and had visited the Holy Land, as is evident from his legs being crossed. The right hand figure, next the wall, is visibly marked with a much older date, perhaps about the conquest. The effigy does not appear in a military character, neither did the lords of that period. The value of these ancient relics have long claimed the care of the wardens, to preserve them from the injurious hand of the boys, and the foot of the window-

cleaner, by securing them with a pallisade. Even Westminster Abbey, famous for departed glory, cannot produce a monument of equal antiquity.

At the foot of these, is another of the same materials, belonging to one of the Marrows, Lords of Birmingham.

Under the north-east window, is a monument of white marble, belonging to one of the Lords of the house of Birmingham; but this is of modern date compared with the others, perhaps not more than three hundred years; he bearing the *parte per pale, indented or, and gules*.

In the church is an excellent organ, and in the steeple a set of chimes, where the ingenious artist treats us with a fresh tune every day of the week.

#### *North Gallery.*

John Crowley, in 1709, gave twenty shillings per annum, payable out of the lowermost house in the priory, to be distributed in bread, in the church, on St. John's-day, to housekeepers in Birmingham, who receive no pay.

Joseph Hopkins died in 1683, who gave £200 with which an estate was purchased in Sutton Coldfield; the rents to be laid out in coats, gowns, and other relief for the poor of Birmingham; he also gave £200 for the poor of Wednesbury; £200 to distressed quakers; £5 10s. to the poor of Birmingham, and the same sum to those of Wednesbury, at his death.

Whereas the church of St. Martin's, in Birmingham, had only fifty-two ounces of plate in 1708, for the use of the communion table; it was, by a voluntary subscription of the inhabitants, increased to two hundred and seventy-five—two flaggons, two cups, two covers and patterns with cases; the whole £80 16s. 6d.

Richard Banner ordered one hundred pounds to be laid out in lands within ten miles of Birmingham; which sum, lying at interest, and other small donations being added,

amounted to £170 with which an estate at Erdington, value £8 10s. per annum, was purchased for the poor of Birmingham.

Richard Kilcup gave a house and garden at Spark Brook, for the church and poor.

John Cooper gave a croft for making of love-days, (merri-ments) among Birmingham men.

William Rixam gave a house in Spiceal-street, No. 26, for the use of the poor, in 1568.

John Ward, in 1591, gave a house and lands in Marston Culey.

William Colmore gave ten shillings per annum, payable out of the house No. 1, High Street.

John Shelton gave ten shillings per annum, issuing out of a house occupied by Martin Day.

Several of the above donations are included in Lench's trust.

John Peak gave a chest bound with iron for the use of the church; seemingly about two hundred years old, and of two hundred pounds weight.

Edward Smith gave £20 per annum to the poor, in 1612, and also erected the pulpit.

John Billingsley, in 1629, gave twenty-six shillings yearly, chargeable upon a house in Dale End, to be given in bread, by sixpence every Sunday.

One croft to find bell-ropes.

Richard Dukesayle, in 1630, gave the utensils belonging to the communion table.

Barnaby Smith, 1633, gave £20 to be lent to ten poor tradesmen, at the discretion of the churchwardens for two or three years.

Catherine Roberts, wife of Barnaby Smith, in 1642, gave £20, the interest of which was to be given to the poor, the first Friday in Lent.

John Jennens, 1651, gave £2 10s. for the use of the



poor born and living in Birmingham ; and also twenty shillings on St. Thomas's day.

John Milward gave £26 per annum, lying in Bordesley ; one third to the school-master of Birmingham Free School ; one third to the principal of Brazen-nose College, Oxford, for the maintenance of one scholar from Birmingham or Haverfordwest, and the remainder to the poor,

Joseph Pemberton gave forty shillings per annum, payable out of an estate at Tanworth, and twenty shillings out of an estate in Harbourne.

Richard Smallbrook gave to the poor of Birmingham ten shillings per annum, arising out of a salt vat in Droitwich.

Robert Whittall gave the pall, or beere cloth.

Widow Cooper, of the Talbot, No. 20, in High Street, gave one towel and one sheet, to wrap the poor in the grave.

Mrs. Jennens gave £10 per annum to support a lecture, the second and third Thursday in every month.

This church, in 1816, underwent a thorough alteration, at the expense of upwards of £4000. The vast number of grave-stones, which nearly covered the floor, and the names of the defunct, with their concise funeral memoirs, were committed to the same oblivion as themselves. The arms, monuments, pews, pulpit, roof, and charities, fell in one general ruin. Nothing was left of this venerable edifice but part of the walls. Even the fine old monuments of the ancient lords, the pride of the church could barely find a place above ground, and that in the last stage of existence, the stair-hole. With all my powers I pleaded for the lords and their arms ; but although I pleaded without a fee, I was no more regarded than some who plead with one. It is easy to destroy that which can never be restored.

The following offspring of charity seems to have expired at its birth, but rose from the dead after an interment of fifty-four years.

William Piddock, in 1728, devised his farm at Winson

Green, about nine acres to his wife Sarah, during life and at her death, to his nephews and executors, William and John Riddall, their heirs and assigns for ever, in trust, for educating and putting out poor boys of Birmingham; or other discretional charities in the same parish.

But William and John wisely considered that they could not put money into any pocket sooner than their own; that as the estate was in the family it was needless to disturb it; that as the will was not known to the world, there was no necessity to publish it; and, as it gave them a discretional power of disposal, they might as well consider themselves *the poor*, for they were both in the parish.

Matters continued in this torpid state till 1782, when a quarrel between the brothers and a tenant broke the enchantment, and showed the actors in real view.

The officers, in behalf of the town, filed a bill in chancery, and recovered the dormant property, which was committed in trust to the constables, churchwardens, and overseers of the day.

The presentation of St. Martin's was vested in the family of Birmingham until the year 1537; since which it has passed through the Dudleys, the Crown, the Marrows, the Smiths, and Tennant.

#### *Rectors.*

1300	Thomas de Hinkley
1304	Stephen de Segrave
1304	John de Ayleston
1336	Robert de Shuteford
1349	William de Seggeley
1354	Thomas de Dumbleton
1369	Hugh de Wolvesey
1396	Thomas Darnall
1412	William Thomas
1414	Richard Slowther

1428	John Waryn
1432	William Hyde
1433	John Armstrong
1433	John Wardale
1436	Henry Cymon
1444	Humphrey Jurdan
1504	Richard Sutton
1536	Richard Myddlemore
1544	William Wrixam
1578	Lucas Smith

*Thus far Dugdale.*

1644	Samuel Wills
1659	Samuel Slater
1662	John Riland
1672	Henry Grove
—	William Daggett
—	William Green
—	Thomas Tyrer
1732	Richard Dovey
1771	Richard Chase
1772	John Parsons
1779	William Hinton, D.D.
1781	Charles Curtis
1829	Thomas Moseley.

During Cromwell's government, Slater a broken apothecary of this place, having been unsuccessful in curing the body, resolved to attempt curing the soul. He therefore, to repair his misfortunes, assumed the clerical character, and cast an eye on the rectory of St. Martin's; but he had many powerful opponents; among others were Jennens, an iron-master, possessor of Aston furnace; Smallbroke, another wealthy inhabitant; and Sir Thomas Holt. However he, with difficulty triumphed over his

enemies, stepped into the pulpit, and held the rectory till the restoration.

Being determined, in his first sermon, to lash his enemies with the whip of those times, he told his people, " The Lord had carried him through many troubles ; for he had passed, like Shedrach, Meshach, and Abednego, through the *fiery furnace*. And as the Lord had enabled the children of Israel to pass over the Red Sea, so he had assisted him in passing over the *Small-brooks*, and to overcome the strong *Holts* of sin and Satan."

At the restoration, suspecting the approach of the proper officers to expel him from the parsonage house, he crept into a hiding-place, under the stairs ; but, being discovered, was drawn out by force, and the place ever after bore the name of *Slater's Hole*.

John Riland succeeded him, who is celebrated for piety, learning, and a steady adherence to the interest of Charles the I. ; in whose cause he seems to have lost every thing he possessed, but his life. He was remarkable for compromising quarrels among his neighbours, often at an expense to himself ; also for constantly carrying a charity box, to relieve the distress of others ; and, though robbed of all himself, never thought he was poor, except when his box was empty. He died in 1672, aged fifty-three.

A succeeding rector, William Daggett, is said to have understood the art of boxing, better than that of preaching : his clerk often felt the weightier argument of his hand. Meeting a quaker, whose profession, then in infancy, did not stand high in esteem, he offered some insults, which the other resenting, told him, " If he was not protected by his cloth, he would make him repent the indignity." Daggett immediately stripped, " There, now I have thrown off my protection."—They fought ; but the spiritual bruiser proved too hard for the injured quaker.



Among the rectors we sometimes behold a magistrate ; at others, those who for misconduct ought to have been taken before one.

The rectory in the king's books, was valued, in 1291, at £5 per annum ; and in 1536, at £19. 3s. 6d.

*A Terrier of the Rectory, written by the Rector,  
about 1680.*

A house wherein the present rector, Mr. Dagget, resides.  
[Parsonage House.]

Two other houses in Birmingham [now three, at No. 15, Spiceal Street.]

Three pieces of glebe land, nineteen acres, between the the school land and Sheepcoat Lane.

Three pieces, called the Five-Way Closes, twenty-one acres, bounded by the lands of Samuel Smallbroke, Esq. and Josiah Porter.

One Close, two acres, bounded by Ladywood Lane.

Parson's Meadow, two acres, bounded by the lands of Thomas Smith, Sir Richard Gough, and Sir Arthur Kaye.

Horsepool Croft, half an acre, bounded by Bell's Barn Lane, [Brickiln Lane] the lands of Robert Phillips and Samuel Smallbroke, Esqrs.

Tithe of all kinds of grain; but instead of hay, wool, and lamb, a due of one shilling in the pound rent, called herbage, in all the parish, except foreign, wherein the custom is fourpence per acre for meadow land, three-pence per acre for leas, threepence for each lamb, three halfpence for a cow and calf; and except part of the estate of William Colmore, Esq. with the Hall Ring, Tanter Butts, Bell's Barns, [No. 1, Exeter Row,] and Rings, for the herbage of which is paid annually thirteen shillings and fourpence, and also, except part of the estate

of Samuel Smallbrook, Esq. for which he pays eight shillings, per annum; and except the estate of Thomas Weaman, called Whittall's Farm, [Catherine Street] for which he pays two shillings and eightpence.

All the above the estates pay the customary modus, whether in or out of tillage.

*Surplice Fees.*

			Rector.		Clerk.	
			s.	d.	s.	d.
For burying in the church	-	-	1	0	1	0
Ditto church-yard	-	-	0	6	0	6
Churching a woman	-	-	0	4	0	4
Marrying by licence	-	-	5	0	2	6
Ditto without	-	-	2	6	1	0
Tithe pig, if seven or upwards	-	-	0	4	0	0
Easter dues, man and wife	-	-	0	4	0	0
Easter dues, each person, above sixteen			0	4	0	0
Clerk's salary £1, paid by the wardens; also twopence from each housekeeper at Easter.						

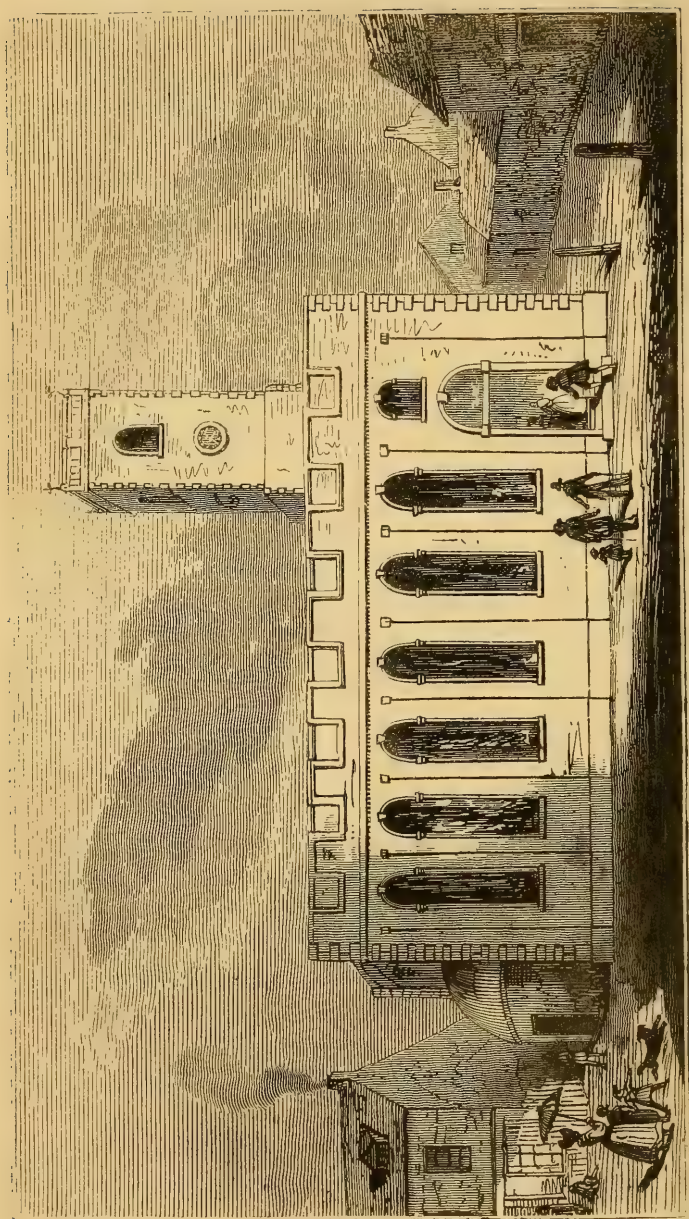
From the above terrier, I am inclined to value the income at about £90 per annum.

The benefice in 1771, was about £350 per annum. A late rector, John Parsons, procured an act, in 1773, to enable the incumbent to grant building leases; the grant of a single lease in 1777, brought the annual addition of about £170. The income is now about £4000.

The repairs of the chancel belong to the rector, and the remainder of the building to the parish.

The church is now lighted with gas, and an evening service is performed there. The parsonage house is now in Bath Row. The old one occupied the site of Pershore Street; the Mart, &c. near Smallbrook Street. The land, containing seven thousand three hundred and forty-five





ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, DETROIT.



square yards, was sold, in 1826, for the sum of £5550, and has since been let off, in various lots, for building, at a handsome profit.

*St. John's Chapel, Deritend.*

This, though joining to the parish of Birmingham, is a chapel of ease belonging to Aston, two miles distant. Founded in the fifth of Richard the II., 1382. As soon as the chapel was erected, William Geffen, Thomas Holden, Robert of the Green, Richard Bene, Thomas de Belne, and John Smith, procured a license from the king, to enable them to endow it with lands to the annual value of £6 13s. 4d. to support a priest ; who, with his successors, seem to have exercised the usual functions of office, as singing, eating, preaching, and sleeping, till 1537, when Henry the VIII. seized the property as chantry lands, valued at £13 1s. 7d. per annum. Two priests, who officiated at Aston, then possessed the pulpit, and divided the income.

I am inclined to think, by interest made to the crown, Henry returned the lands ; for in 1553, we find John Mole and Edward Keys, incumbents of Deritend, at £5 each.

In 1677, Humphrey Lowe, of Coventry, bequeathed a farm at Rowley-Regis, called the Brick-house, then let at £35, to support the chapel. This bequest is held, in trust, by six of the inhabitants of Deritend or Bordesley.

Solicitations were made in 1707, for Queen Ann's bounty, but the return made by the governors being £38, they were rejected.

This chapel does not, like others in Birmingham, seem to have been erected first, and the houses brought round it. It appears, by its extreme circumscribed latitude, to have been founded upon the site of other buildings, which were purchased, or rather given, by Sir John de Birmingham, Lord of Deritend, and situated upon the boundaries of the manor, perhaps to accommodate in some measure, the

people of Digbeth; because the church in Birmingham must, for many ages, have been too small for the inhabitants.

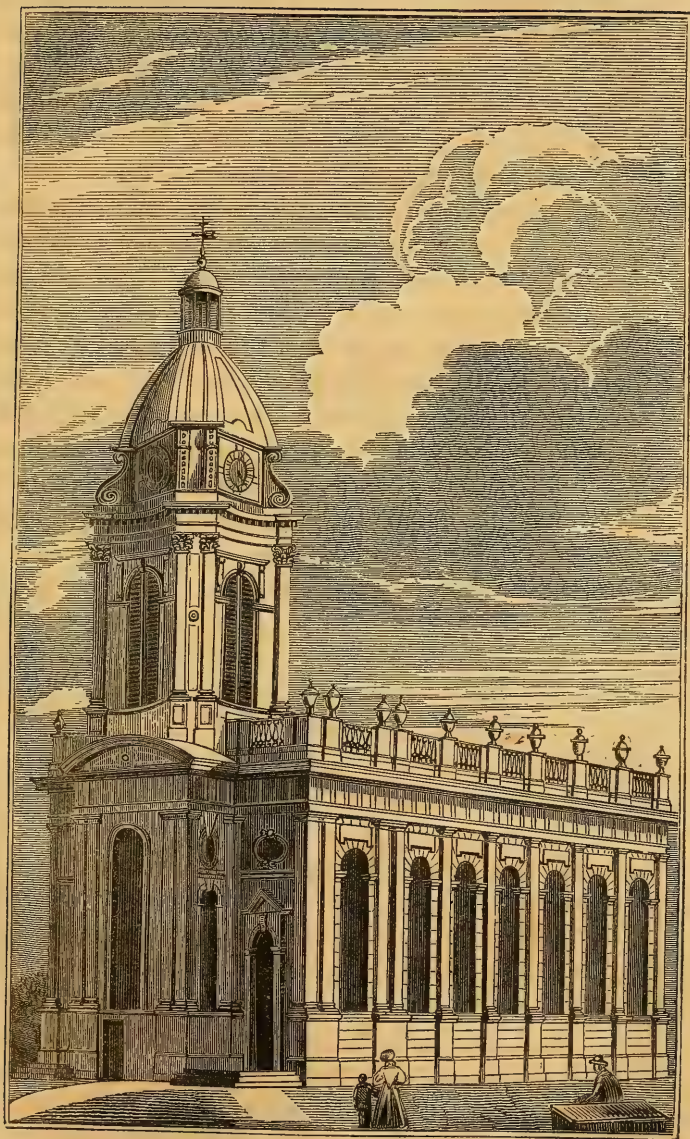
Time seems to have worn out that building of 1382, in the windows of which were the arms of Lord Dudley, and Dudley empaling Berkley, both knights of the garter, descended from the Somerys, Barons of Dudley castle; also a whole figure of Walter Arden, Esq., of an ancient family, often mentioned Lord of Bordesley. The present building was erected in 1735, and the steeple in 1762. In 1777, eight of the most musical bells, together with a clock entered the steeple. Income in 1791, £100, now considerably augmented, by the advance in the value of property. The building is of brick, and will accomodate about seven hundred persons. The incumbent is elected by the inhabitant householders of the hamlets of Deritend and Bordesley.

*Chaplains.*

— James Spilsbury	-	-	1699
1699 Israel Warten	-	-	1714
1714 John Haws	-	-	1716
1716 Richard Gibbons	-	-	1717
1717 John Hansted	-	-	1755
1755 Thomas Cox	-	-	1791
1791 John Darwall	-	-	1828
1828 Edward Palmer	-	-	—

*St. Philip's.*

We have touched upon various objects in our peregrinations through Birmingham, which meet with approbation, though viewed through the medium of smoke; some of these, being covered with the rust of time, command our veneration; but the prospect before us is wholly modern. We have mounted, by imperceptible gradations, from beauty to beauty, till we are now arrived at the summit.



ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH.





If an historian had written in the last century, he would have recorded but two places of worship. The artist who carries the manufactures among foreigners, or the man who wantonly loads the people with burdens, draws the wrath of the place upon his own head.

This curious piece of architecture, the steeple of which is erected after the model of St. Paul's, in London, but without its weight, does honour to the age that raised it, and to the place that contains it. Perhaps the eye of the critic cannot point out a fault, which the hand of the artist can mend; perhaps too, the attentive eye cannot survey this pile of building, without communicating to the mind a small degree of pleasure. If the materials are not proof against time, it is rather a misfortune to be lamented, than an error to be complained of, the country producing no better.

Yet, amidst all the excellences we boast, I am sorry to charge this chief ornament with an evil which admits no cure, that of not ranging with its own symmetry, or the adjacent buildings; out of seven streets, with which it is connected, it lines with none. We may be delighted with a human figure, complete in stature, exactly moulded with symmetry, and set off with the graces of dress; but we should be disgusted, if his right side seemed to attempt to out-walk his left.

This defect in religious architecture, arises from a strict adherence to the custom of the ancients, who fixed their altars towards the east. It is amazing, that even weakness itself, by long practice, becomes canonical; it gains credit by its age and its company. Hence, Sternhold and Hopkins, by being long bound up with scripture, acquired a kind of scripture authority.

The ground, originally, was part of a farm, and bore the name of the Horse Close; afterwards *Barley Close*. Thus a benign spot of earth gave additional spirits to a

man when living, and kindly covered him in its bosom when dead. This well chosen spot is the summit of the highest eminence in Birmingham, with a descent every way ; and, when the church was erected, there were not any buildings nearer than those in Bull Street. The land was the gift of Robert Phillips, Esq., whence the name, ancestor to William Theodore Inge, Esq.

In all degrees of people, from the bishop to the beadle, there seems a propensity in the mind to arrive at the honours of sainthood : by joining our names in partnership with a saint, we share with him a red letter in the almanack, Out of six churches in Birmingham, three bear the names of the donors. St. Bartholomew's would, probably, have taken that of its founder, *John Jennens*, Esq. but that name happened to be anticipated by Sir *John de Birmingham*, who conferred it upon Deritend Chapel. St. Mary's could readily perpetuate the name of its benefactress, because we had no place of worship that bore it. But as neither the popish nor the protestant calendar produced a St. Charles, the founder of St. Paul's was unfortunately excluded.

The gifts, which the benefactor himself believes are charitable, and expects the world to believe the same, if scrutinized, will be found to originate from various causes—counterfeits are apt to be offered in currency for sterling. Perhaps *ostentation* has brought forth more acts of beneficence than charity herself ; but, like an unkind parent, she disowns her offspring, and charges them upon charity.—Ostentation is the root of charity ; why else are we told, in capitals, by a large stone in the front of a building—“ This hospital was erected by William Bilby, in the sixty-third year of his age, 1709.” Or, that “ John Moore, yeoman, of Worley Wigorn, built this school in 1730.” Nay, pride even tempts us to strut in a second-hand robe of charity, left by another ; or why do we read

—“ These alms-houses were erected by Lench’s trust in 1764. W. WALSINGHAM, BAILIFF.” Another utters the word *charity*, and we rejoice in the echo. If we miss the substance, we grasp at the shadow.

Sometimes we assign our property for religious uses late in the evening of life, when *enjoyment* is over, and almost *possession*. Thus we bequeath to piety what we can keep no longer. We convey our name to posterity at the expense of our successor, and scaffold our way towards heaven up the walls of a steeple. Will charity chalk up one additional score in our favour, because we grant a small portion of our land to found a church, which enables us to augment the remainder treble its value, by granting building leases? A man seldom makes a bargain for heaven, and forgets himself. Charity and self-interest, like the apple and the rind, are closely connected, and, like them, we cannot separate one without trespassing on the other.

In contributions of the lesser kind, the giver examines the quantum given by those of his own station; *pride* will not suffer him to appear less than his neighbour.

Sometimes he surrenders merely through importunity, which indicates as much *charity*, as the garrison does *merit* which surrenders when closely besieged. Neither do we fear *our left hand knowing what our right hand doth*, our only fear is, lest the world should *not* know it.

This superb edifice was begun by act of parliament in 1711, under a commission, consisting of twenty of the neighbouring gentry, appointed by the bishop of the diocese, under his episcopal seal. Their commission was to end twelve months after the erection of the church.

Though Birmingham ever was, and perhaps ever will be, considered as one parish, yet a portion of land, about one hundred acres, nearly triangular, and about three-fourths built up, was taken out of the centre of St. Martin’s, like a

shred of cloth out of a great coat to make a less, and constituted a separate parish, by the appellation of St. Philip's. We shall describe this new boundary by an imaginary journey, for a real one perhaps was never taken since the land was first laid out, nor ever will to the end of time. (See Plan.)

The church was consecrated in 1715, and finished in 1719, the work of eight years; at which time the commissioners resigned their powers into the hands of the diocesan, in whom is the presentation, after having paid, it is said, the trifling sum of £5012; but perhaps such a work could not be completed for £20,000. Three reasons may be assigned why so small a sum was expended; many of the materials were given; more of the carriage, and some heavy debts were contracted.

The urns upon the parapet of the church, which are highly ornamental, were fixed at the same time with those of the school, in about 1756. The celebrated Baskerville, was churchwarden at the time.

When I first saw St. Philip's, in the year 1741, at a proper distance, uncrowded with houses, for there were none to the north, New Hall excepted, untarnished with smoke, and illuminated by a western sun, I was delighted with its appearance, and thought it then, what I do now, and what others will in future, *the pride of the place*. If we assemble the beauties of the edifice, which cover a rood of ground; the spacious area of the churchyard, occupying four acres, ornamented with walks in great perfection, shaded with trees in double and treble ranks, and surrounded with buildings in elegant taste; perhaps its equal cannot be found in the British dominions.

The steeple till the year 1761 contained a peal of six bells, which were then augmented to ten; at which time St. Martin's, the mother church, having only eight, could



not bear to be out-numbered by a junior, though of superior elegance, therefore ordered twelve into her own steeple; but as room was insufficient for the admission of bells by the dozen, means were found to hoist them tier over tier. Though the round dozen is a complete number in the counting-house, it is not altogether so in the belfry; the octave is the most perfect concord in music, but diminishes by rising to an octave and a half; neither can that dozen well be crowded into the peal. But perhaps the artist had another grand scheme in view, that of accomodating the town with the additional harmony of the chimes; for only a few tunes can be played on the octave, whilst the dozen will compass nearly all.

Two thousand people may be accomodated in the church, but it has contained near three thousand.

In the vestry is a theological library, bequeathed by the first rector, William Higgs, for the use of the clergy in Birmingham and its neighbourhood, who left £200 for future purchase, which was afterwards made, and an elegant library erected adjoining the parsonage house, by the Rev. Mr. Madan, in 1792.

Under the centre aisle runs a vault, the whole length of the church, for the reception of those who choose to pay an additional guinea.

The organ excels; the paintings, mouldings, and gildings are superb; whether the stranger takes an external or an internal survey, the eye is struck with delight, and he pronounces the whole the work of a master. Its conveniency also can only be equalled by its elegance.

#### *In the Front Gallery,*

Upon application of Sir Richard Gough to Sir Robert Walpole, then in power, George the I. gave £600, in 1725 towards finishing this church. Three remarks naturally arise from this declaration: that the prodigious sums

expended upon this pious undertaking, were beyond the ability of the inhabitants ; that the debts contracted were many years in discharging ; and that one of the best of kings, the head of the Brunswick line, bestowed a liberal benefaction upon a people not completely reconciled to his house.

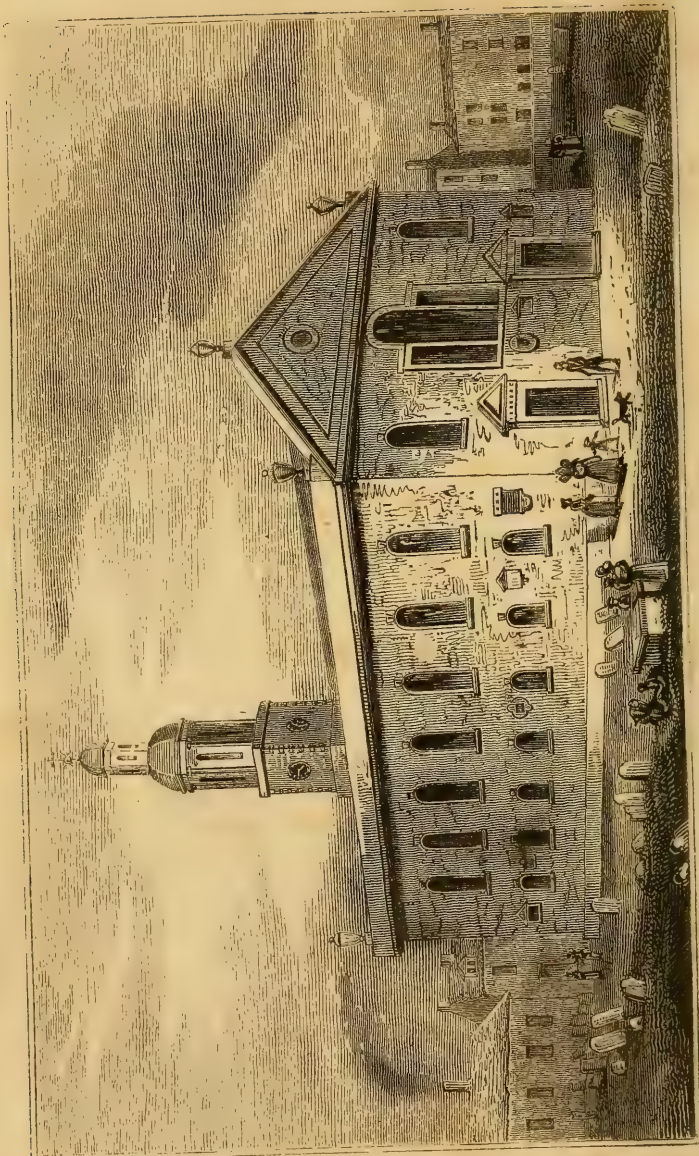
Interment in the church is wisely prohibited ; an indecency incompatible with a civilized people. The foreigner will be apt to hold forth the barbarity of the English nation, by observing, “ they introduce corruption in their very churches, and pay divine adoration upon the graves of their ancestors.” Places of worship were designed for the living ; the dead give up their title with their life ; besides, even small degrees of putrefaction, confined in a room where the air cannot circulate, may become prejudicial to health ; it also ruins the pavement, as was done at St. Martin’s. Our first inhabitants, therefore, lie contented in the church-yard, by their unfortunate equals, having private sepulchres appropriated for family use. Perhaps at the last day, no inquiry will be made whether they lay on the in or the outside of the walls.

The musical festivals which have become popular and fashionable resorts, for many years past, were held in this church, till 1834 ; when the festival, for that season, was held in the Town Hall, of which we shall have occasion to speak, when we come to the article Town Hall. The income, in 1791, was about £300, now worth £500.

*Rectors.*

1715	William Higgs
1733	William Vyse
1770	Charles Newling
1787	Spencer Maden
1809	Edmund Outram
1821	Lawrence Gardner





SAINT BARTHOLOMEW'S.



*St. Bartholomew's,*

Built in 1749, on the east side of the town, will accommodate about eight hundred hearers; is neat and elegant. The land was the gift of John Jennens, Esq. possessor of a considerable estate, in and near Birmingham.

By the solicitation of Mrs. Weaman, Mrs. Jennens gave £1000 and the remainder was raised by contribution, to accomplish the building.

Wherever a chapel is erected, the houses immediately, as if touched by the wand of magic, spring into existence. Here is a spacious area for interment, amply furnished by death. The infant steeple, if it will bear the name, is very small, but beautiful. The chancel has this singular difference from others, that it veres towards the north. Whether the projector committed an error, I leave to the critics. It was the general practice of the Pagan church to fix their altar, upon which they sacrificed, in the east, towards the rising sun, the object of worship. The Christian church, in the time of the Romans, immediately succeeded the Pagan, and scrupulously adopted the same method; which has been strictly adhered to. By what obligation the Christian is bound to follow the Pagan, or wherein a church would be injured by being directed to any of the thirty-two points in the compass, is doubtful. Certain it is, if the chancel of Bartholomew's had tended due east, the eye would have been exceedingly hurt, and the builder would have raised an object of ridicule for ages. The ground will admit of no situation but that in which the church now stands. But the inconsiderate architect of Deritend Chapel, anxious to catch the eastern point, lost the line of the street; we may therefore justly pronounce, *he sacrificed to the east.*

The altar piece was the gift of Basil, Earl of Denbigh: and the communion plate, consisting of one hundred and eighty-two ounces, that of Mary Careless. The appoint-

ment of chaplain rests with the rector of St. Martin's. The income arising entirely from pew rents, is precarious. It was, in 1791, about £100. Chaplain, Rev. Thomas Nunns.

*St. Mary's.*

Though the houses for divine worship were multiplied in Birmigham, yet the inhabitants increased in a greater proportion ; so that in 1772, an act was obtained for two additional chapels. St. Mary's, therefore, was erected in 1774, in the octagonal form, not overcharged with light nor strength ; in an airy situation. The clock was seldom seen to go right, but the wonder ceases if there are no WORKS within.

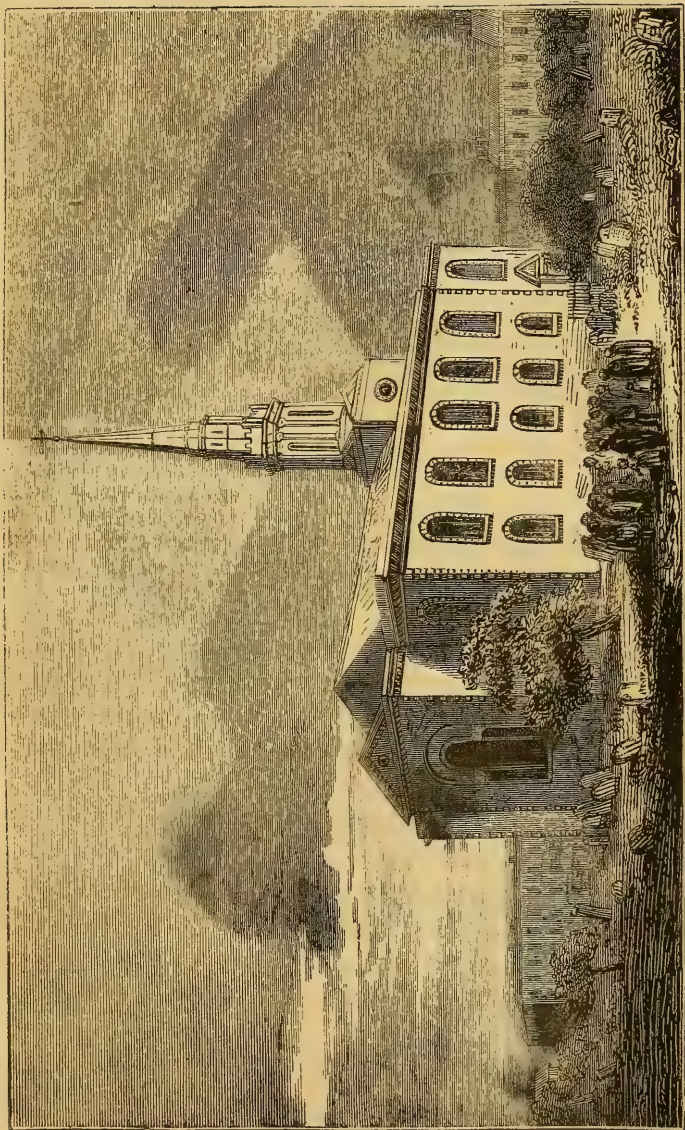
The land was the gift of Mary Weaman, in whom is the presentation, who inducted the Rev. John Ryland. Annual income about £200. Present chaplain, Rev. E. Burn.

*St. Paul's.*

The act was procured for this chapel at the same time as for that of St. Mary's ; but it was not erected till 1779, upon a spot of ground given by Charles Colmore, Esq., upon the declivity of a hill, not altogether suitable for the elegant building it sustains, which is of stone—plain beauty unites with strength.

This roof, like that of St. Mary's, appears too full. In 1791, a beautiful window was placed over the communion table, representing the Conversion of St. Paul ; by that celebrated artist, Francis Eginton ; price four hundred guineas.

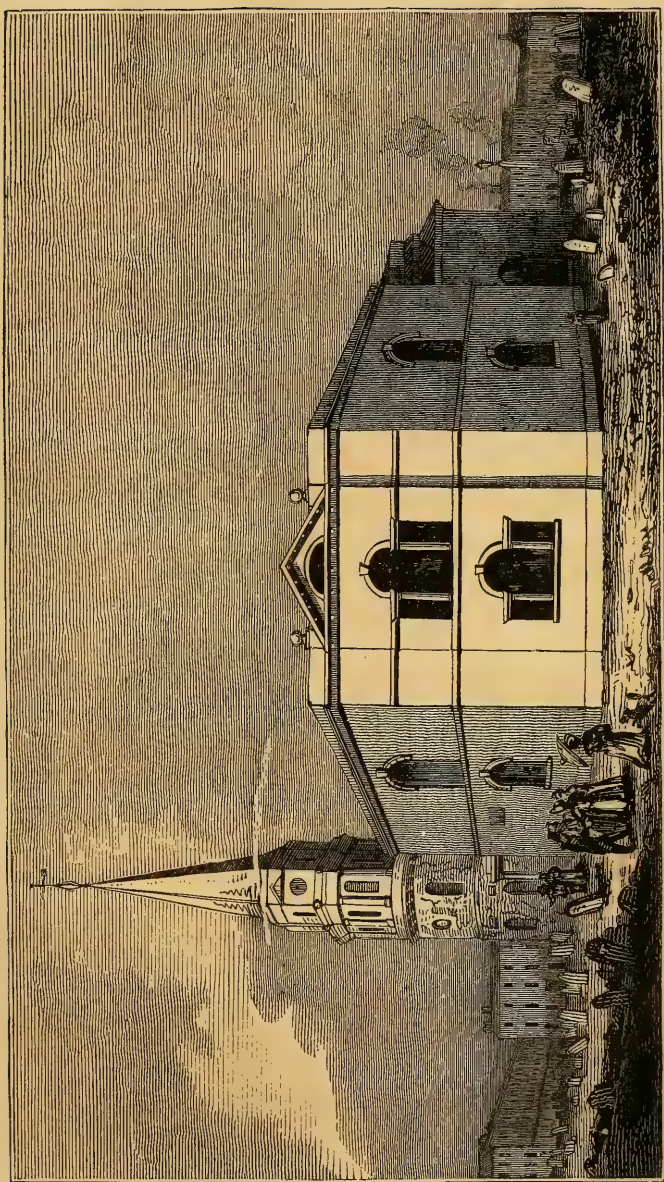
In 1823, the steeple was erected, which does great honour to this modern stile of architecture, sufficient money could not be raised to erect it with the chapel. The chapel contains eleven hundred sittings, three hundred of which are free. There is also accommodation for two



ST. PAUL'S CHAPEL.







ST. MARY'S CHAPEL.



hundred Sunday school children. Burial fees, part of which is paid to the rector of St. Martin's; and pew rents, which are lower by one half, than at any other chapel in Birmingham, according to Act of Parliament, are the only sources of support for the minister. Patron, Edward Latimer, Esq. Chaplains, 1779, William Toy Young; 1817, Ran Kenedy.

*St. James's Chapel, Ashted,*

Was, previous to 1789, the residence of the celebrated physician, *Dr. Ash*, hence the name of this chapel, and the district around it. It was used as a place of worship, from the above date, till 1810, without consecration. A plot of land was attached at the latter date, for a cemetery, which with the chapel, was then consecrated. It is a chapel of ease to Aston. Minister, Rev. Edward Burn.

*Christ Church.*

Isaac Hawkins, deceased, having left a sum of money, to be disposed of at the discretion of his executors, the sum of £1000 was offered by them to build a free church: the Bishop of Lichfield offered to annex the *prebend of Tachbroke*, of the cathedral church of Lichfield, to the income of the minister; and William Philips Inge, Esq., presented a piece of land for its site. Under these flattering prospects the first stone was laid, July 22, 1805, by Richard Pratchet, high bailiff. But, notwithstanding a subscription was entered into, and his Majesty George III. gave £1000, the funds were soon exhausted, and the work lay dormant for several years. The church was consecrated July 6th, 1813, and opened for public worship on the 18th. The spire and portico were not added till 1815; and in December, 1816, the clock, which has four dials, was put up. The delay in finishing this church, is, no doubt, attributable to the distress and actual *decrease* in the population, about this period, *see page 81*. A lofty portico in front, is sup-

ported by four Roman Doric columns. The spire is any thing but handsome. The length of the building is about one hundred and forty feet, by seventy-one wide. There is a fine-toned and powerful organ, by Elliot, and a beautiful altar-piece, of carved mahogany, presented by Mr. Stock, of Bristol, and accomodation for one thousand five hundred hearers. A double staircase, constructed upon geometrical principles, the balustrades of which are iron, cased with brass, leads to the gallery. The whole of the ground floor sittings are free, those in the galleries are let, and from these arise the principal income of the minister. The males are not suffered to sit with the females on the free seats. Present minister, the Rev. George Hodgson, who is chaplain to the bishop of the diocese, and holds some other benefices. The church is lighted with gas, and service is performed morning and evening on Sundays, and every Thursday evening. The curacy which is a perpetual one, is in the gift of the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry. The radicals, in 1819, marched in a very formidable body to this church, to hear divine service ; the minister, the Rev. John Hume Spry, who preached a political sermon, in defence of the government, upon this occasion, is said to have been rewarded with a deanery, for his conduct.

#### *St. George's Church*

Is erected in a pleasant and healthful spot, at the top of Tower Street, around which, since 1822, as much building has sprung up as would of itself make a small town. It is constituted a parish church. The parish is bound to contribute to the repairs of St. Martin's for twenty years. Marriage and all other religious rites may be performed here. The parish comprises *Summer Hill, Camden Street, Warstone Lane, Key Hill, part of Nelson, Frederick, Regent, Vittoria Kenion, Livery, and Water Streets ;*

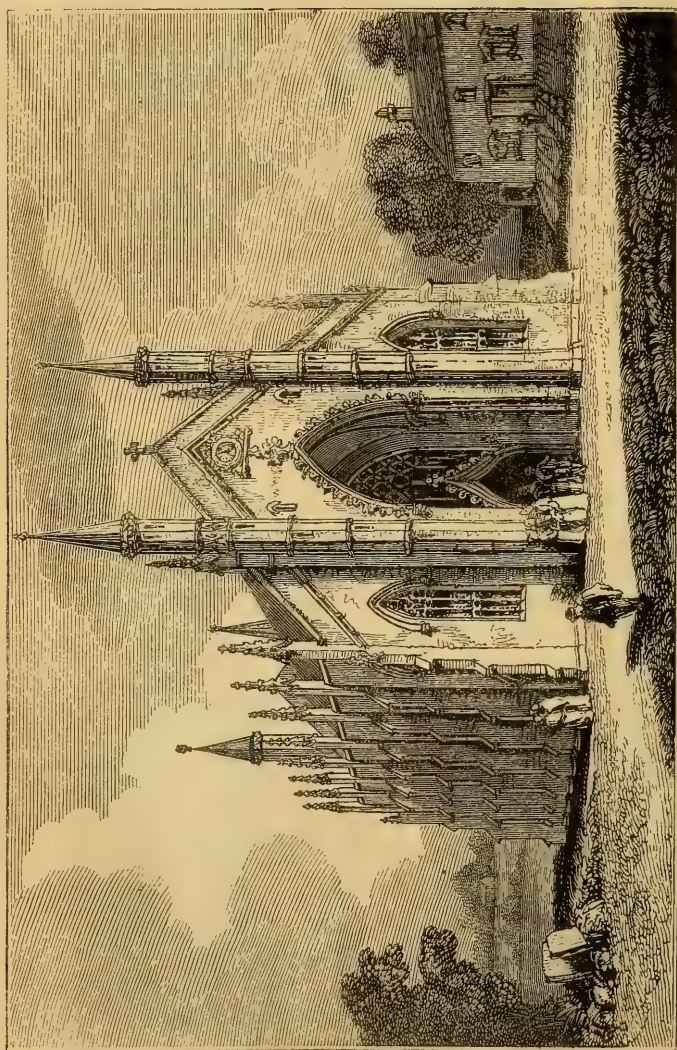






ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH.





TRINITY CHAPEL, BORDISLEY.



*Great Hampton, Branstone, Hall, Hockley, Harford, and Barr Streets; Constitution Hill, Great Hampton Row, Henrietta, Bond, Little Hampton, Hospital, Tower, and Brearley Streets; Summer Lane, Newton Row, Ormond, Manchester, Blews, and Brewery Streets, &c.* The church was erected from designs by Thomas Rickman, architect, in the gothic style of the reign of Edward the III. It stands near the centre of a burial ground of considerable size, walled round, with handsome entrance gates, and cast iron piers. The first stone was laid April 19, 1820, and the church opened for divine service, September 15, 1822. The entire expense of the building amounted to £12,735, and what is rather remarkable, £1100 less than the estimate. Part of the site was purchased by private subscription, and the rest given by Miss Colmore and the Marquis of Hertford. Interior dimensions of the building, ninety-eight feet by sixty; width of the nave, twenty-six feet; height forty-five. Height of the tower to the top of the pinnacles, one hundred and fourteen feet. Number of sittings one thousand nine hundred and fifty-nine; one thousand four hundred of which are free. The interior is fitted up with a splendid organ, to match the building, stained glass windows, and decorated altar-piece. Minister, the Rev. John Garbett, A.M.

*Trinity Chapel, Bordesley.*

This chaste and beautiful gothic edifice, stands by the road leading to *Warwick* and *Stratford*, in the hamlet of Bordesley, and in the parish of Aston. The design is by T. Goodwin, architect, of London. The interior is fitted up in a superior style of elegance. The altar-piece, by Foggo, represents Christ healing at the pool of Bethesda. The Catherine-wheel window, and the general appearance of the interior are much admired for their simplicity and beauty. The external length is one hundred and thirty-five feet, by seventy-six broad. The internal dimensions

ninety feet by sixty, and the height forty-five feet. The cost of the erection, to the amount of £14,235, was defrayed by the commissioners for building new churches; but expenses of some thousands of pounds were incurred in the purchase of land for cemetery, residence for clergyman, &c. Subscriptions to the amount of £3000 were raised, which proved insufficient to liquidate the debt. The first stone was laid September 29, 1820, and the chapel consecrated January 23, 1823. The number of sittings one thousand eight hundred and twenty-one; the whole of the gallery is free. The nomination rests in the vicar of Aston. Perpetual curate, Samuel Crane.

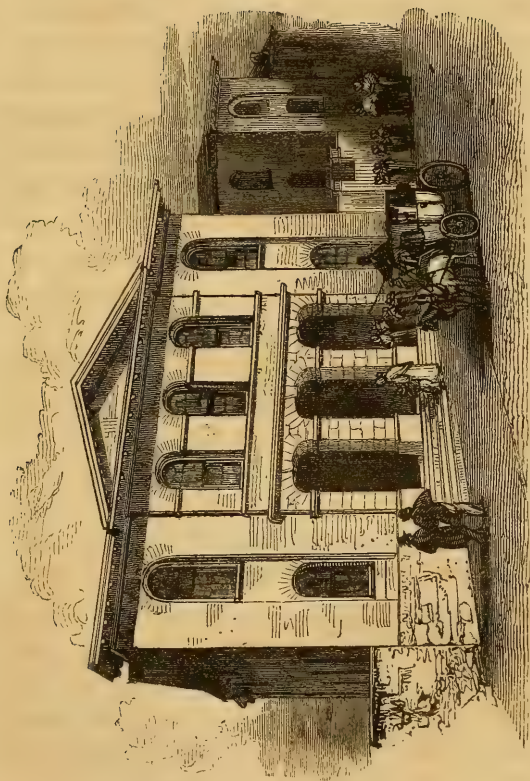
*Saint Peter's,*

Situate in Dale End, is another of the churches erected by the commissioners for building new churches, or rather by part of a grant made by parliament of two millions sterling, for such purposes. The spot upon which it stands, was covered with buildings, previous to its erection. It is in the Grecian stile of architecture, with a massive Doric portico, of four columns, after the example from the temple of Minerva, at Athens. The interior length, exclusive of the chancel and porch, is one hundred feet, the width, sixty feet. The first stone was laid July 26, 1825; opened for divine service, August 10, 1827. The site cost nearly £6000, the structure, £13,000, The architects, Messrs. Rickman and Hutchinson. This building was accidentally burnt, on the night of January 24, 1831, and the whole of the interior destroyed. It is now being restored by subscription. It would accommodate about two thousand persons. It is in the parish of St. Philip's; and the curacy is in the gift of the rector. Minister, Anthony James Clark, who is rector of Portlock, Somerset.

*Saint Thomas's,*

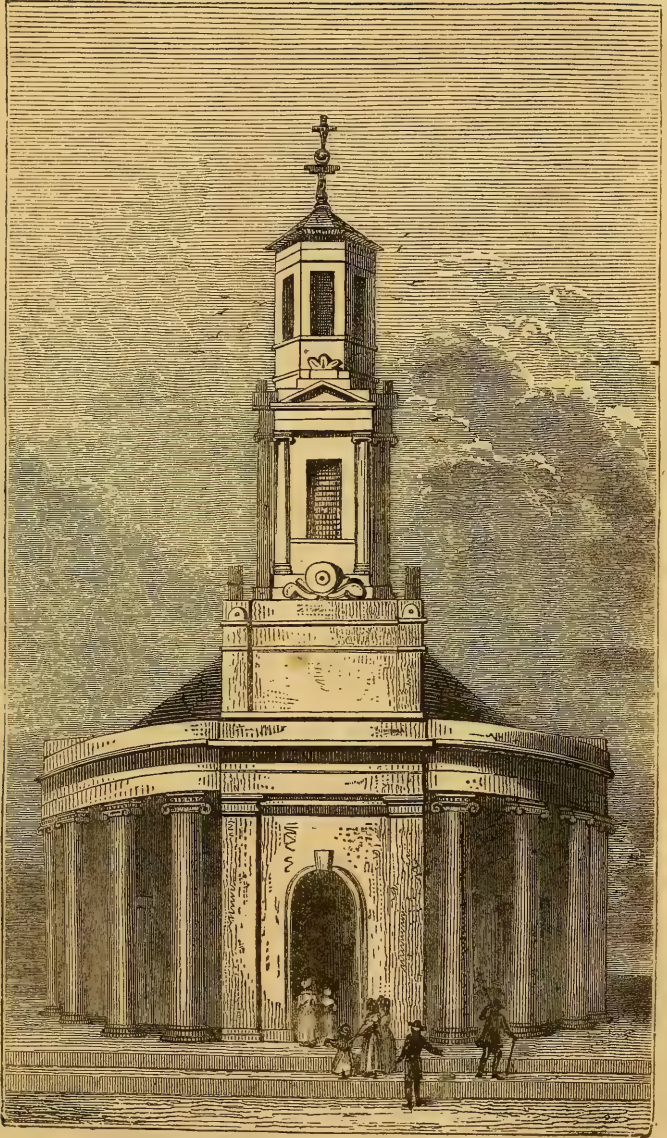
Erected upon a pleasant eminence, called Hollowayhead.





OLD MEETING HOUSE.





ST. THOMAS'S CHURCH.



The first stone was laid October 2, 1826, and the church was consecrated October 22, 1829. It is a large and handsome structure, in the Grecian style, with two circular porticoes of the Ionic order. The tower is one hundred and thirty feet high, and is supported by massive piers. The whole appearance of this building has an imposing effect. Rickman and Hutchinson architects. It is probable that this will be constituted a separate parish. The arbitrary manner in which these parishes are taken, will leave poor old St. Martin's, with its two thousand eight hundred and sixty-four acres, nothing but shreds and patches. Interior dimensions of this church, one hundred and thirty feet long, by sixty wide, and the height of the ceiling thirty-eight feet, which is coved, pannelled, and enriched with flowers. There are two thousand one hundred and twenty-five sittings, of which one thousand five hundred are free. Total cost of the building, £14,222. Minister, William Marsh.

#### *All Saints*

Is the last, and I think the least, of the places of worship, built for the established church in the parish of St. Martin, but very near the boundaries of it, in the road to the Soho. It is a neat structure; in the Gothic style, built of brick, with stone pinnacles and cornices. Consecrated, September 28, 1833. Minister, S. F. Morgan.

#### *Old Meeting House.*

Birmingham being exempt from the operation of the Oxford or Five Mile Act, which prohibited nonconforming ministers from coming within five miles of any corporate town, or of the place where they had exercised their ministry; it was therefore a refuge for many of the ejected ministers, who were deprived of their livings and benefices by Charles the II., who vainly attempted in 1662, to

enforce a uniformity of faith and worship, by act of parliament. These conscientious men conducted in secret, but perseveringly, those devotions the law declared to be illegal, amid peril and persecution, from house to house. In 1672, an indulgence was granted, and the first room licensed for public worship, at which a Mr. Samuel Fisher preached, who had been ejected from Thornton-in-the-Moor, Cheshire. Another indulgence was granted in 1687, which was followed by the Act of Toleration in 1689. The date of the register of the first building erected upon the site of the present Old Meeting House, and of the first Protestant Dissenting Chapel erected in Birmingham, for which, see plate of Old Meeting House, destroyed in 1791.

In 1709 Dr. Sacheverell raised the cry of "The church in danger," which was responded to by various bigots throughout the country, and which continued with some intermissions, till after the death of Queen Ann. At this time the hatred, which had been fostered by the high church party broke out, July 16, 1715, and serious riots took place. On Saturday, July 16, the mob gutted the Lower Meeting House, and on the Sunday attacked the Upper or Old Meeting House, and destroyed nearly the whole of the interior by fire. They pulled down a Meeting House, at Bromwich, burnt one at Oldbury, and another at Dudley, and pulled down one at Cradley, and another at Bradley.

In 1748 a portion of this society adopting Calvinistic principles, seceded from the Old Meeting, and formed themselves into a society in Carr's Lane, where they continue to flourish. 1791, is one of the most memorable years in the annals of this place of worship, a repetition of those disgraceful scenes which occurred seventy-six years before, took place to a much greater extent. The Old Meeting House was entirely destroyed by fire, and the present neat



and commodious building erected upon its site, which was opened 4th of October, 1795. The society recovered from the hundred, the sum of £1390 7s. 5d. The present building is square, of brick, fifty-nine by fifty-nine. A reformed liturgy was introduced into the service of this congregation, October 11, 1829. A burial place is attached to this Meeting House, which was enlarged in 1779 by subscription; it is used in common by both Old and New Meeting Houses.

The number of sittings one thousand one hundred. This and a Meeting House in Digbeth, near Deritend, were the only two places of worship for Protestant Dissenters for nearly fifty years.

*Ministers of the Old Meeting House.*

W. Turton	-	-	1686	1716
D. Greenwood	-	-	1700	1730
E. Broadhurst	-	-	1714	1730
D. Mattock	-	-	1732	1746
J. Wilkinson	-	-	1739	1756
W. Howell	-	-	1746	1770
S. Clark	-	-	1756	1769
R. Scholefield	-	-	1772	1799
N. Nichols	-	-	1779	1784
J. Coates	-	-	1785	1801
R. Kell	-	-	1801	1821
J. Corrie	-	-	1817	1819
S. W. Browne	-	-	1819	1821
H. Hutton	-	-	1822	

*New Meeting House.*

In 1692, three years after the first meeting-house for Protestant Dissenters was founded, one place of worship proved insufficient for the accommodation of the increasing numbers of nonconformists in Birmingham. A second

society, which had some time before existed, opened a meeting-house in Digbeth. In 1715, this place suffered from the rude hands of a lawless mob, which had been excited to acts of violence by the cry of "the church in danger!" Upon a promise made by the proprietor that the place should be put to other uses, the rioters took out the seats, and whatever else they could find belonging to the congregation, and burnt them, leaving the chapel uninjured. This chapel was subject to floods in winter, and during the heavy rains of summer, being near the river Rea, which frequently overflowed its banks. Floods have occurred but seldom of late years, owing to the bed of the river having been made deeper, and embankments, &c., constructed. This, and want of room, caused a New Meeting House to be contemplated, about 1725, and a chapel was erected in Moor Street, upon the site of the present new meeting-house, and was opened April 19, 1732. The Lower Meeting House was afterwards converted into a workshop, and the spot still bears the name of Meeting House Yard. The sound of the pulpit is changed into that of the bellows; instead of an impression upon the heart, it is now stamped upon the button. The visitants used to appear in a variety of colours, but now always in black. The celebrated Dr. Priestley was chosen as co-pastor, with Mr. Blithe, in 1780, whose name will be handed down to posterity, as a bright example of Christian simplicity and mildness; this, together with his philosophical researches and discoveries, will gild the pages of history, and gain the admiration of the scientific, and the veneration of all sects of Christians. This meeting-house was totally destroyed on the night of July 14, 1791, by a "Church and King" mob. A valuable library belonging to the congregation fell a prey to the flames. The Old Meeting House shared a similar fate, and the rioters proceeded to the house of Dr. Priestley, which they fired, and his valuable library, manu-

scripts, philosophical apparatus and instruments perished. Dr. Priestley was obliged to fly. By these proceedings, the New Meeting House was for ever deprived of his services, and posterity, of works which had taken a long life of industry, care, and perseverance to compile; and eventually, the country, of a man of whom at this day it is justly proud. He sought in another land, that peace, that honour, and that regard, his own countrymen had denied him.

At this period the two societies met jointly, in a building, in Livery Street, until their respective places of worship were rebuilt. July 22, 1802, the present building was opened for public worship. It is a neat and convenient brick building, fronted with stone. It contains three galleries, and one thousand two hundred sittings. Dimensions outside ninety-nine feet by fifty-six, inside seventy-six by forty-seven. There is an organ, and two noble vestry rooms attached. The register of the former building being lost, the society could not recover damages, but £2000 were paid by the government towards the new building. The Sunday schools attached to this chapel, in conjunction with the Old Meeting Sunday schools, have obtained some celebrity. They have enabled many persons to raise themselves above the sphere into which chance had thrown them. The pupils in these schools were the most numerous of any in Birmingham till within the last six months. Some difference having arisen between the Sunday school teachers and the Sunday school committee, a secession was the consequence, and the teachers formed a separate society and Sunday school, in Cambridge Street. They have for the present adopted a system of lay preaching. They have between three and four hundred boys in the school.

*Ministers of the New Meeting House.*

1692	— Sillitoe	- - -	1704
1705	Thomas Pickard	- - -	1747
1732	Samuel Bourn	- - -	1754
1747	Samuel Blyth	- - -	1791
1754	William Hawkes	- - -	1780
1780	Joseph Priestley, LL.D. F.R.S. &c.	- - -	1791
1791	John Edwards	- - -	1802
1792	David Jones	- - -	1795
1803	John Kentish	- - -	—
1804	Joshua Toulmin, D.D.	- - -	1815
1817	James Yates, M.A. F.L.S. F.G.S. &c.	- - -	1825
1826	John Reynall Wreford	- - -	1831
1832	Samuel Bache	- - -	—

*Particular Baptists.*

This order of religionists, in the beginning of the eighteenth century, held forth in a diminutive style, in a room opposite Nelson's Monument, the site of the present Market Hall. Increasing in numbers and in consequence, they afterwards removed their apparatus and themselves to a room at the back of No. 38, High Street. The first regular meeting-house was founded in Cannon Street, in 1738, enlarged in 1780, and rebuilt in 1806. Number of sittings, one thousand two hundred. The Rev. Thomas Sivan, minister. This denomination of Christians has gradually risen in consequence, and has now the following meeting-houses, belonging to the connexion, in the town: —Newhall Street, Bond Street, and Mount Zion, Meeting-houses. Newhall Street Chapel, situated at the corner of Lionel Street, called Zion Chapel, originally belonged to the New Jerusalem Church. It is a plain brick building, falling back from the line of the street. Minister, J. Ham. Number of sittings, six hundred.



Bond Street Chapel has a respectable congregation under the Rev. Thomas Morgan. Number of sittings, about one thousand.

Mount Zion Chapel was built upon Newhall Hill, in 1823; fronting Graham Street. It was first occupied by the members of the Scotch Church, and opened by the celebrated Rev. Edward Irving, March 24, 1824; he being then, in the height of his popularity, the house was crowded to excess. This sect soon after removed to another place erected for them, in Newhall Street. The Baptists some time after purchased this chapel. It is a handsome octagonal structure, with a lofty Doric portico. It will contain a congregation of two thousand five hundred. The interior presents a somewhat novel appearance. Attached is an organ, extensive vaults, a burial ground, vestries, large school-rooms, dwelling-houses, &c. Minister, the Rev. J. Hoby.

#### *General Baptists.*

This sect has a small, convenient chapel, in Lombard Street. Number of sittings, about five hundred. Minister, the Rev. G. Cheatle.

#### *Independents.*

In 1748, a part of the Old Meeting congregation, who had adopted Calvinistic principles, seceded from the society, and entered a meeting-house, erected for them in Carr's Lane. This afforded accommodation for four hundred and fifty hearers, and was removed in 1802, to make room for a larger structure, containing eight hundred sittings. A rapid increase in the society, made it necessary again to enlarge their building, which was carried into execution in the latter part of 1819, and beginning of 1820, and the present structure, capable of holding two thousand one hundred persons, with three hundred and

fifty free sittings, was opened for divine service, August, 1820. It is a heavy, uninteresting pile, viewed without. The interior is commodious, and is fitted up in a superior style. Minister, the Rev. J. A. James. There are other meeting-houses belonging to the connexion; Livery Street and Steelhouse Lane are the principal. Livery Street Chapel was originally, an amphitheatre, and afterwards, occupied by the Old and New Meeting congregation, from 1791 to 1802, and since, by a branch of the Carr's Lane Society. Will seat about two thousand persons.

Steelhouse Lane Chapel, called Ebenezer, was opened December 9, 1818. The first stone was laid June 4, 1816, by the Rev. Jehoiada Brewer, who was to have become the minister of this place, but he died before its completion, and is interred in front of the building, where a monument is erected to his memory. It is a large brick building, and has a plain, but very neat appearance, possessing the advantage of standing a considerable distance from the street, in a large area. In front is a portico, supported by eight Ionic columns. It contains one thousand two hundred sittings. Large and commodious school-rooms are attached. The cost about £7000. The present minister, the Rev. Timothy East.

#### *Methodists.*

We learn from ecclesiastical history, that the people in high life, are always followers in religion, though they are the best leaders in political and social concerns, yet all religion seems to originate from the lowest class. Every religion is first obstructed by violence, passes through the insults of an age, then rests in peace, and often takes up the rod against another.

The first preachers of the Christian faith, the short-sighted apostles, were men of the meanest occupations,

and their church, a wretched room in a miserable tenement. The superb buildings of St. Peter's in Rome, and St. Paul's in London, used by their followers, were not within the reach of their penetration. They were also totally ignorant of triple crowns, red hats, mitres, crosiers, robes, and rochets, the idols of their successors. The religion of a private room, soon became the religion of a country; the church acquired affluence, for all churches hate poverty; and this humble church, disturbed for ages, became the church of Rome, the disturber of Europe.

John Wickliff, in 1377, began to renew her disturbance. This able theologist planted our present national church, which underwent severe persecutions from its mother church at Rome; but, rising superior to the rod, and advancing to maturity, she became the mother of a numerous offspring, which she afterwards persecuted herself; and this offspring, like *their* mother, were much inclined to persecution.

Puritanism, her firstborn, groaned under the pressure of her hand. The Baptists, founded by a tailor, followed, and were buffeted by both. — Independency appeared, ponderous as an elephant, and trampled upon all three.

George Fox, a composition of the oddest matter, and of the meanest origin, formed a numerous band of disciples, who suffered the insults of an age, but have carried the arts of prudence to the highest pitch.

The Muggletonians, the Prophets, the Superlapsarians, &c. like untimely births, just saw the light and disappeared.

The Moravians, under the influence of Zinzendorf, rose about 1740, but are not in a flourishing state; their circumscribed rules, like those of the cloister, being too much shackled to thrive in a land of freedom.

James Sandiman introduced a religion, about 1750, but though eclipsed himself by poverty, he taught his preachers to shine; for he allowed them to grace the pulpit with ruffles, lace, and a queue. Birmingham cannot produce one professor of the two last churches.

The Christian religion has branched into more sectaries in the last three hundred years, than in the fifteen hundred before—the reason is obvious. Before the introduction of letters, knowledge was small; but the printing-press though dark in itself, and surrounded with yet *darker* materials, diffused a ray of light through the world, which enabled every man to read, think, and judge for himself; hence diversity of opinion, and the absurdity of reducing a nation to one faith, vainly attempted by Henry the VIII., and again by Charles the II.

The artillery of vengeance was pointed at Methodism for thirty years; but, fixed as a rock, it could never be beaten down, and its professors now enjoy their sentiments in quiet. After the institution of this sect by George Whitfield, in 1738, they were first covered by the heavens equally exposed to the rain and the rabble; and afterwards they occupied, for many years, a place in Steelhouse Lane, where the wags of the age observed, “they were eat out by the bugs.” They therefore procured a cast off theatre in Moor Street, where they continued to exhibit till 1782; when quitting the stage, they erected a superb meeting-house in Cherry Street, at the expense of £1200. This was opened, July 7, by John Wesley, the chief priest, whose extensive knowledge and unblemished manners, give us a tolerable picture of apostolic purity, who *believed*, as if he were to be saved by faith, and who *laboured*, as if he were to be saved by works. This building was removed in 1823, to make room for the present enlarged edifice, which will accommodate about two thousand persons. The ministers are changed about every three years.



Thus our composite order of religion, an assemblage of the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, the Independent, and the Baptist, fled from the buffetings of the vulgar, and now take peaceable shelter from the dews of heaven.

There are now several other meeting-houses belonging to this sect of Christians. *Belmont Row, Bradford Street, Islington, Constitution Hill*, and a variety of minor chapels under various titles, *New Connexion, Primitive Methodists, Revivalists, &c. &c.* differing slightly from the original sect.

### *The New Jerusalem Church.*

“The Members of the New Church signified by the Jerusalem in the Revelation,” are receivers of the theological doctrines made known to the world through the instrumentality of the Hon. E. Swedenberg; a Swedish nobleman of the most unquestionable piety, and unimpeachable veracity, and who was well known to the world for his profound attainments in philosophy and science. A society, in connexion with this increasing body of Christians, was first established in Birmingham about forty-five years ago. In the year 1791 the place of worship, now known by the name of Zion Chapel, Newhall Street, Lionel Street, was erected by them, but owing unfortunately, to its never having been vested in local trustees, for the benefit of the society, it was sold, and the proceeds applied as the private property of a bankrupt. With an exception of about two years, when the majority of the members removed to Paradise Street Chapel, this society continued to worship till the year 1830, in a temporary Chapel in Newhall street, known by the name of the New Jerusalem Temple, but which was scarcely distinguishable as a chapel, in its exterior, having being erected with a view of being altered to two dwelling-houses, whenever the society might remove. Shortly after the accession of their present minister, who succeeded the Rev. J.

Proud, they rapidly increased in numbers, and have erected for themselves a handsome and commodious structure in Summer Lane, which is designated the New Jerusalem Church.

The plan of this church is singularly contrived, having beneath it several private dwellings and a school room, without sacrificing either the convenience or uniformity of the building. The entrance is by a flight of steps, surmounted by a portico, supported by four Ionic columns. The pews are calculated to seat about six hundred hearers. The galleries are spacious, but there are no seats under them, that part being walled off as the upper story of the houses underneath. The centre of the roof is arched from end to end, and in the orchestra at the back of the pulpit is placed a small well-toned organ. The church is lighted by eight lofty windows, and is fitted up with great neatness. In worship they use a liturgical service. Their present minister is the Rev. E. Madeley. In the year 1833 this society erected a large Free Day School, on the same premises, which at present is supported by voluntary contributions, and a trifling payment from the scholars, aided by an annual grant from the General Conference of the New Church—The number of scholars nearly two hundred, who are daily instructed by the resident minister. The Sunday school belonging to this church contains about one hundred and fifty boys and girls.

*Lady Huntingdon's Connexion.*

There is a meeting-house in King Street occupied by this sect, opened in 1787, it is a cast off theatre, but answers the present purpose quite as well as the former. Number of sittings, one thousand five hundred. Minister, the Rev. John Jones.

The Antinomians have a meeting-house in Bartholomew Street.

The Scottish Church, occupy a small place of worship in Broad Street, just erected.

The meeting-house, lately occupied by the Scottish church, now called St. Jude's, has a respectable society of the Established Church, but support their church and minister by voluntary subscriptions. They use the church liturgy with some alteration. Minister, the Rev. J. Abbott, There is accommodation for about eight hundred.

*Quaker's Meeting, in Bull Street.*

A large convenient place, and notwithstanding the plainness of the profession, rather elegant. The congregation is very flourishing, rich, and peaceable. Chandler tells us, to the everlasting honour of the Quakers, that they are the only Christian sect who have never exercised the cruel weapon of persecution.

An author may assert a fact without the least hazard to his reputation : the behaviour of the Quakers approaches the nearest to perfection of any religious society upon earth. A spacious cemetery is situated at the back, completely obscured from view by buildings, there is also a smaller one in Monmouth Street. George Fox, a man of humble birth, of great talent, and greater perseverance, born in 1624, was the founder of this sect, about 1646. The Non-conformist resisted the compulsory demands of uniformity of creed and ceremony ; George Fox denounced all religious establishments, and claimed freedom for all,—one law for all,—for every man or woman in every situation, character, and aspect. I find the Friends established at Chadwick and Stourbridge in 1655, but the earliest record of them in Birmingham is 1682, though in all probability they had existed as a society much earlier. They were persecuted with the greatest rigour, until the act of toleration in 1689. Thousands were imprisoned, and their property to a large amount confiscated. They support their own poor. They

always suffer all ecclesiastic, war, or any unjust tax to be taken by distraint. They are not likely to multiply very considerably, their tenets being rather calculated to exclude all but their descendants. They have no priest or paid teacher of religious doctrines, and their respectable and general peaceable conduct, shews that paid ministers may be dispensed with.

### *Jewish Synagogue.*

We have also among us a remnant of Israel. A people who, when masters of their own country, were scarcely ever known to travel, and who are now seldom employed in anything else. But, though they are ever moving they are ever at home ; and once lived the favourites of *heaven*, and fed upon the cream of the *earth* ; but now are little regarded by either ; whose society is entirely confined to themselves, except in the commercial line.

The Synagogue, originally situated in the Froggery, but removed to Severn Street, about 1807. The first building was taken down to make room for the present large and commodious structure in 1827. They have two places for burial, one near the Worcester Canal, the other at Islington, near Bath Row. The number of resident Jews is small, but there are always a considerable number who visit us like birds of passage, in the way of trade.

### *Roman Catholic Chapels.*

There are two chapels for the followers of Catholicism in Birmingham. St. Peter's erected in 1789, a neat plain brick building, situated near Broad Street. It contains a beautifully painted altar-piece, and a very fine toned organ. Priest, Rev. T. M. M'Donnell. The other erected in Shadwell Street, in 1813, a smaller but neat and convenient structure, this class of Christians is now rather







THEATRE ROYAL, BIRMINGHAM.

numerous and highly respectable. Priest of St. Chad's, Rev. E. Peach.

They formerly enjoyed a place for religious worship, near St. Bartholomew's Chapel, still called Masshouse Lane ; but the rude hands of irreligion destroyed it in 1688. There was none nearer than Edgbaston, two miles distant, till the chapel was erected at Easy Hill.

### *Theatres.*

The practice of the Theatre is of great antiquity. We find it in repute among the Greeks ; we also find, the more nations are civilized, the more they have supported the stage. It seems designed for two purposes, improvement and entertainment. There are certain exuberances that naturally grow in religion, government, and private life, which may with propriety be attacked by the poet and the comedian, but which can scarcely be reduced by any other power. Whilst the stage keeps this great end in view, it answers a valuable purpose to the community. The pen of the poet is to reform, not to indulge a corrupt age, as was the case in the days of Charles the II., when indecency was brought on to raise a laugh.

Tragedy is to melt the heart, by exhibiting the unfortunate ; satiate revenge, by punishing the unjust tyrant ; to discard vice, and to keep undue passion within bounds.

Comedy holds up folly in a ridiculous light ; whatever conduct or character is found in the regions of absurdity, furnishes proper materials for the stage ; and out of these, the pen of a master will draw many useful lessons.—The pulpit and the stage have nearly the same use, but not in the same line—that of improving the man.

The English stage opened about the conquest, and was wholly confined to religion ; in whose service it continued, with very little intermission, to the extinction of the Plantagenets. The playhouses were the churches, the

principal actors, the priests, and the performances taken from Scripture ; such as the Fall of Man, the Story of Joseph, Sampson, Histories of the Saints, the Sufferings of Christ, Resurrection, Day of Judgment, &c.

Theatrical exhibition in Birmingham, is rather of a modern date. As far as memory can penetrate, the stroller occupied, occasionally, a shed of boards in the fields, now Temple Street : here he acted the part of distress, in a double capacity. The situation was afterwards changed, but not the eminence, and the Hinkleys dignified the performers' booth.

In about 1730, the amusements of the stage rose in a superior style of elegance, and entered something like a stable in Castle Street. Here the comedian strutted in painted rags, ornamented with tinsel. The audience raised a noisy laugh, half real and half forced, at threepence a head.

In about 1740, a theatre was erected in Moor Street, which rather gave a spring to the amusement ; in the day time, the comedian beat up for volunteers for the night, delivered his bills of fare, and roared out an encomium on the excellence of the entertainment, which had not always the desired effect.

In 1751, a company arrived, who announced themselves, " His Majesty's Servants, from the Theatres Royal, in London ; and hoped the public would excuse the ceremony of the drum, as beneath the dignity of a London company." The novelty had a surprising effect ; the performers had merit, the house was continually crowded, the general conversation turned upon theatrical exhibition, and the town was converted into one vast theatre.

In 1752, it was found necessary to erect a larger theatre, that in King Street, and we multiplied into two London companies. The pulpits took the alarm, and in turn, roared after their customers ; but the pious teachers forgot



it was only the fervour of a day, which would cool of itself; that the fiercer the fire burns, the sooner it will burn out. This declaration of war fortunately happening at the latter end of summer, the campaign was over, and the company retreated into winter quarters without hostilities. It was afterwards found, that two theatres were more than the town choose to support, therefore that in Moor Street was set for a Methodist Meeting House.

In 1774, the theatre in King Street was enlarged, beautified, and made more convenient; so that it had few equals. About the same time that in New Street was erected upon a suitable spot, at an expense of £5660, an extensive plan, and richly ornamented paintings and scenery. An additional and superb portico, was erected in 1780, which perhaps may cause it to be pronounced "One of the first theatres in Europe." Two busts, in relief, of excellent workmanship, are elevated over the attic windows; one is the father, and the other the refiner of the British stage—Shakspeare and Garrick.

August 7, 1792, this structure was destroyed by fire; how the fire originated has never been clearly ascertained, it was generally supposed to be the work of an incendiary, but if so the miscreant was never discovered. The probability is, that happening so soon after the riots, this supposition was circulated without any foundation.

Some of the buildings adjacent were purchased by the proprietors, and an enlarged structure erected upon its site, at the expense of £14000. On January 6, 1820, this building like the former, fell a prey to the devouring element, supposed to be by accident after the play of Pizarro.

The present theatre, which can scarcely be equalled out of London, either for accommodation or elegance, like the phoenix, out of its own ashes, sprung up in the short space of seven months, and was opened to the public, August 14,

following. It is brilliantly lighted with gas, and will contain more than two thousand persons, and at the usual rates of admission will produce about £260. The premises attached was for some time occupied as a tavern, under the title of the Shakspeare, for which they were intended, but have long been discontinued for that purpose, and are now occasionally let to conjurors or exhibitors of any raree shows, for which these rooms are well adapted. One portion is regularly occupied as a billiard room. The decline of the drama has been much felt in Birmingham for many years, and I believe the management has been anything but profitable. I may perhaps here remark, that though the Theatre was twice burnt, the front on each occasion remained uninjured.

#### *Amusements.*

Man seems formed for variety, whether we view him in a rational or an animal light. A sameness of temper, habit, diet, pursuit, or pleasure, is no part of his character. The different ages of his life, also produce different sentiments ; that which gives us the highest relish in one period, is totally flat in another. The bauble that pleases at three, would be cast into the fire at threescore ; the same hand that empties the purse at twenty, would fill it at fifty ; in age, he bends his knee to the same religion which he laughed at in youth ; the prayer-book, that holds the attention of seventy, holds the lottery pictures of seven ; and the amorous tale that awakes the ideas of twenty-five, lulls old age to sleep. Not only life is productive of change, but every day in it. If a man would take a minute survey of his thoughts and employments, for only twenty-four hours, he would be astonished at their infinite variety.

The pleasures of the field claim their votaries ; but in a populous country like that of Birmingham, plenty of game is not to be expected ; for want of wild fowl, therefore, the

shooter has been known to attack the tame. However, the farmer need not be under any great concern for his property; the sportsman seldom does any thing with his arms—but—*carry them*. We are more famous for *making* than *using* the gun.

A pack of hounds have sometimes been kept by subscription termed, the Birmingham Hunt; but, as the sound of the dogs and the anvil never harmonized together, they have been long in disuse. The jocund tribe therefore, having no scent of their own, fall into that of the neighbouring gentry, many of whom support a pack.

The man of reflection finds amusement in domestic resources; and, in his own mind, if unoppressed. Here the treasures collected from men, books, and observation, *are laid up for many years*, from which he draws pleasure, without diminishing the stock. For the entertainment of the public, there are many public gardens with bowling greens and quoit grounds attached. The *Cross at Aston Vauxhall*, and the *Plough and Harrow, Edgbaston*, may be mentioned among the number.

Party excursion is held in considerable esteem, in which are included Enville, the seat of Lord Stamford; Hagley, that of the late Lord Lyttelton; the Leasowes, the property of the late William Shenstone, Esq; and the ruins of Dudley and Kenilworth Castles. We will omit the journey to London, a tour which some of us have made all our lives *without seeing it*.

Cards and the visit are linked together, nor is the billiard table totally forsaken. One man amuses himself in amassing a fortune, and another in dissolving one.

About thirty-six of the inhabitants keep carriages for their own private use; and near fifty have country houses. The relaxations of the mechanic are, *news, cards, dominoes, bagatelle, and ale*, in winter; *skittles, quoits, ball, marbles, or cricket*, in summer. The free and easy,

where the buck sports his cash, or his consequence, his music, or his mimicry, is the resort of many; whilst others attend to *pugilism, cock battles, dog fights, duck hunting, bear, badger, or bull baiting*, according to taste, inclination, or education. Reading now forms the amusement of many, as will be evident, by the vast number of publications distributed in Birmingham, which, I think, does not fall far short of one hundred thousand per month, not exceeding the value of two shillings each, but three-fourths of the number, not exceeding twopence each.

Health and amusement are found in the prodigious number of private gardens, scattered round Birmingham, from which we often behold the father returning with a cabbage, and the daughter with a nosegay.

### *Hotel.*

The spot where our great-grandmothers smiled in the lively dance, when they possessed the flower of beauty in the spring of life, is lost in forgetfulness. The floor that trembled under that foot which was covered with a leather shoe, tied with a silken string, and which supported a stocking of dark blue worsted, not of the finest texture, is now buried in oblivion.

In 1750, we had two assembly rooms; one at No. 11, in the Square; the other No. 85, in Bull Street. This last was not much in use afterwards. That in the Square continued in repute till in the course of that evening which happened in October, 1765, when Edward, Duke of York, had the honour of leading down the dance, and the ladies of Birmingham enjoyed that of the Duke's hand. He remarked, "that a town of such magnitude as Birmingham, and adorned with so much beauty, deserved a superior accommodation; that the room itself was mean, but the entrance meaner." Truth is ever the same, whether it comes from a prince or a peasant; but its



effects are not. Whether some secret charm attended the duke's expression, that blasted the room, is uncertain, but it never after held its former eminence.

In 1772, a building was erected by subscription, upon the tontine principle, at the head of Temple Row, and was dignified with the French name of hotel, and since called the Royal Hotel. From a handsome entrance the ladies are now led through a spacious saloon, at the extremity of which the eye is struck with a grand flight of steps, opening into an assembly room, which would not disgrace even the royal presence of the duke's brother.

The pile itself is large, plain, and elegant, but standing in the same line with the other buildings, which before were really genteel, eclipses them by its superiority; whereas, if the hotel had fallen a few feet back, it would, by breaking the line, have preserved the beauty of the row, without losing its own.

The original subscription concerts, held at this hotel, have been established more than thirty years, and are attended and supported by all the leading families in the town. There are three or four concerts each year, at which much talent is displayed. There are other concerts held here, under the superintendence of the Harmonic Society, and occasional concerts by musical professors of talent.

In addition to a splendid building, erected in New Street, a few years ago, under the title of *New Royal Hotel*, there are six other houses that have adopted the modern appellation of hotel; the *Hen and Chickens*, the *Swan*, the *Nelson*, originally the *Dog*, the *Castle*, High Street, the *Albion*, and the *Stork*, Old Square. These, besides affording general accommodation for travellers, are general coach offices, and posting houses. There are, however, several other inns that supply the gentlemen of the road with first-rate fare, both for themselves and

horses; *the Union Inn*, Union Street; *the Saracen's Head*, Bull Street; *the George*, and *the White Hart*, Digbeth; *the Woolpack*, Moor Street; and *the King's Head*, Worcester Street, are among the most respectable.

### *Wakes.*

This ancient custom was left us by the Saxons. Time, that makes alteration only in other customs, has totally inverted this.

When a church was erected, it was immediately called after a saint, put under his protection, and the day belonging to that saint kept in the church as a high festival. In the evening preceding, the inhabitants, with lights, approached the church, and kept a continual devotion during the whole night; hence the name, wake. After which they entered into festivity. But now the devotional part is forgot, the church is deserted, and the festivity turned into riot, drunkenness, and mischief.

Without searching into the mouldy records of time, for evidence to support our assertion, we may safely pronounce the wake the lowest of all low amusements, and completely suited to the lowest of tempers.

Wakes have been deemed a public concern, and the legislature has been obliged to interpose for the sake of that order which private conduct could never boast. In the reign of Henry the VI., every consideration, whether of a public or a private nature, gave way to the wake. The harvest in particular was neglected. An order therefore issued, confining the wakes to the first Sunday in October, consequently the whole nation run mad at once.

Wakes in Birmingham are not ancient. Why, St. Martin's then the only church, was neglected, is uncertain. Although we have no wakes for the town, there are three kept in its borders, called Deritend, Chapel,

and Bell Wakes. The two first are in the spring of existence, the last in the falling leaf of autumn.

Deritend Wake probably took its rise at the erection of her chapel, in 1383. Chapel Wake, in 1750, from St. Bartholomew's Chapel, is held in the meridian of Coles-hill Street; was hatched and fostered by the publicans, for the benefit of the spiggot. Among other amusements, was that of bull-baiting, till the year 1773, when the commissioners of lamps, in the amendment of their act, wisely broke the chain, and procured a reprieve for the unfortunate animal. Another was the horse-race, but a few years ago a person being killed, rather slackened the entertainment. What singular genius introduced the horse-race into a crowded street, I am yet to learn. In the evening the passenger cannot proceed without danger; in the morning, he may discover which houses are public, without any other intelligence than the copious streams that have issued from the wall. The blind may distinguish the same thing, by the strong scent of the tap.

Bell Wake is the junior by one year, originating from the same cause, in 1751, in consequence of ten bells being hung up in St. Philip's steeple.—Till within these few years, we were at this wake, struck with a singular exhibition, that of a number of boys running a race through the streets naked. Some of the inhabitants seeing so fair a mark for chastisement, applied the rod with success, put a period to the sport, and obliged the young runners to run under cover.

### *Clubs.*

It may be expected, from the title of this chapter, that I shall introduce a set of ruffians, armed with massive weapons; or, having named a trump, a set of gamblers shuffling and dealing out the cards. But whatever veneration I may entertain for these two fag ends of our

species, I shall certainly introduce a class of people, which, though of the lower orders, are preferable to both.

Social compact is a distinguishing mark of civilization. The whole British empire may be justly considered as one grand alliance, united for public and private interest, and this vast body of people are subdivided into an infinity of of smaller fraternities, for individual benefit.

Perhaps there are hundreds of these societies in Birmingham, under the name of clubs ; some of them boast the antiquity of a century, and by prudent direction have acquired a capital, at accumulating interest. Thousands of the inhabitants are connected, nay, to be otherwise is rather unfashionable, and some are people of sentiment and property. There are now upwards of four hundred benefit societies in Birmingham, containing about forty thousand members. The payments, in case of sickness, for adult members, are from six to fourteen shillings per week, and the disbursements are supposed to amount to £200 per week.

A variety of purposes are intended by these laudable institutions ; but the principal one, is that of supporting the sick. Each society is governed by a code of laws of its own making, which have at least the honour of *resembling* those of legislature, for words without sense are found in both, and we sometimes stumble upon contradiction.

The poor's rates, enormous as they appear, are softened by these brotherly aids ; they tend also to keep the mind at rest, for a man will enjoy the day of health, with double relish, when he considers he has a treasure laid up for that of sickness. If a *member* only of a poor family be sick, the *head* still remains to procure necessities ; but if that head be disordered, the whole source of supply is dried up, which evinces the utility of such institutions.



The general custom is to meet at a public house, every fortnight, spend a trifle, and each contribute sixpence, or any stated sum, to the common stock. The landlord is always treasurer, or father, and is assisted by two stewards, annually or monthly chosen.

As honour and low life are not always found together, we sometimes see a man who is rather *idle*, wish the society may suppose him *sick*, that he may rob them with more security. Or, if a member hangs long upon the box, his brethren seek a pretence to expel him. On the other hand, we frequently observe a man silently retreat from the club, if another falls upon the box, and fondly suppose himself no longer a member; or if the box be loaded with sickness, the whole club has been known to dissolve, that they may rid themselves of the burthen; but the Court of Requests finds an easy remedy for these evils, and at a trifling expense.

The charity of the club is also extended beyond the grave, and terminates with a present to the widow.

The philosophers tell us, "There is no good without its kindred evil." This amiable body of men, marshalled to expel disease, has one small alley, and perhaps but one. As liquor and labour are inseparable, the imprudent member is apt to forget to quit the club room, when he has spent his necessary twopence, but continues there to the injury of his family.

Another of these institutions is the *rent club*, where, from the weekly sums deposited by the members, a sop is regularly served up twice a year, to prevent the growlings of a landlord.

In the *breeches club* every member ballots for a pair, value a guinea, *promised* of more value by the maker. This club dissolves when all the members are served.

The intentions of the *book club* are well known, to catch the productions of the press as they rise.

The *watch club* has generally a watchmaker for its president, is composed of young men, and is always temporary.

If a tailor be short of employment, he has only to consult a landlord over a bottle, who, by their joint powers, can give birth to a *clothes club*; where every member is supplied with a suit to his taste, of a stipulated price. These are chiefly composed of bachelors, who wish to shine in the eye of the fair.

Thus a bricklayer stands at the head of the *building club*, where every member perhaps subscribes two guineas per month, and each house, value about one hundred pounds, is balloted for as soon as erected. As a house is a weighty concern, every member is obliged to produce two bondsmen for the performance of covenants.

I will venture to produce another, the *capital club*, for when the contributions amount to £50, the members ballot for this capital, to bring into business: here also securities are necessary. It is easy to conceive the two last clubs are extremely beneficial to building and to commerce.

There are several hundreds of *money clubs*, for sums of £5, £10, £20, £25, £50, £80, and £100; various sums are contributed weekly, fortnightly, or monthly, according to agreement. The shares are generally sold to the best bidder, and interest paid from two and a half to five per cent, by the purchasers, to the end of the club. Bonds are of course required for the repayment of the money. The cash thus collected, and thus disposed of, must amount to a very large sum, not less than £100,000 per annum.

The last I shall enumerate is the *clock club*. When the weekly deposits of the members amount to about £4, they cast lots who shall be first served with a clock of that value, and continue the same method till the whole club is supplied; after which, the clockmaker and landlord cast

about for another set, who are chiefly composed of young housekeepers. Hence the beginner ornaments his premises with furniture, the artist finds employment and profit, and the publican empties his barrel.

Thus we have taken a transient survey of this rising colony of arts, uniting observation with fact. We have seen her dark manufactures, in darker times; we have attended her through her commercial, religious, political, and pleasurable walks: have viewed her in many points of light, but once only in decline, till we have now set her in the fair sunshine of the present day.

Perhaps I shall not be charged with prolixity, that unpardonable sin against the reader, when it is considered, that three thousand years are deposited in the compass of two hundred and twelve little pages.

Some other circumstances deserve attention, which could not be introduced without breaking the thread of history; but as that thread is now drawn to an end, I must, before I resume it, step back into the recesses of time, and slumber through the long ages of seventeen hundred years; if the active reader, therefore, has no inclination for a nod of that length, or, in simple phrase, no relish for antiquity, I advise him to pass over the five ensuing chapters.

### *Ikenield Street.*

About five furlongs north of the Navigation Bridge, in Great Charles Street, which is (1791) the boundary of the present buildings, runs the Ikenield Street, one of those famous pretorian roads which mark the Romans with conquest, and the Britons with slavery.

By that time a century had elapsed, from the first landing of Cæsar in Britain, the victorious Romans had carried their arms through the southern part of the isle.

They therefore endeavoured to secure the conquered provinces by opening four roads, which should each rise in the shore, communicate with, and cross each other, form different angles, extend over the island several ways, and terminate in the opposite sea.

These are the Watling Street, which rises near Dover, and running north-west through London, Atherstone, and Shropshire, in the neighbourhood of Chester, ends in the Irish Sea.

The Foss begins in Devonshire, extends north-east through Leicestershire, continuing its course through Lincolnshire, to the verge of the German Ocean.

These two roads, crossing each other at right angles, form a figure resembling the letter X, whose centre is the High Cross, which divides the counties of Warwick and Leicester.

The Ermine Street extends along the southern part of the island, near the British channel ; and the

Ikenield Street, which I cannot so soon quit, rises near Southampton, extends nearly north, through Winchester, Wallingford, and over the Isis, at New Bridge ; thence to Burford, crossing the Foss at Stow-in-the-Woulds, over Bitford Bridge, in the county of Warwick, to Alcester ; by Studley, Ipsley, Beely, Wetherick Hill, Studley Street ; crosses the road from Birmingham to Broomsgrove, at Selley Oak, leaving Harborne a mile to the left, also the Hales Owen road a mile west of Birmingham : thence by the observatory, in Lady Wood Lane, where it enters the parish of Birmingham, crossing the Dudley road at the Sand-pits ; along Worstone Lane, through the little pool, and Hockley-brook, where it quits the parish : thence over Handsworth Heath, entering a little lane on the right of Bristle-lands-end, and over the river Tame, at Oxford-house, (Oldford,) directly to Sutton Coldfield. It passes the Ridgway one hundred and twenty-six yards east of



King's Standing, a little artificial mount, on which Charles the I. is said to have stood when he harangued the troops he brought out of Shropshire, at the opening of the civil wars in 1642. From thence the road proceeds through Sutton Park and the remainder of the Coldfield; over Radley Moor, from thence to Wall, a Roman station, where it meets the Watling Street; leaving Lichfield a mile to the left, it leads through Street Hay; over Fradley Heath; thence through Alderwashays, crossing the river Trent, at Wichnor Bridge, to Branson Turnpike; over Branson Moor, where for about two hundred yards it is yet visible—here it appears noble in its ancient Roman dress, though in tatters; then over Burton Moor, leaving the town half a mile to the right: thence to Monk's Bridge, upon the river Dove; along Egington Heath, Little Over, the Rue Dyches, Stepping Lane, Nun Green, and Darley Slade, to the river Derwent, one mile above Derby upon the eastern banks of which stands Little Chester, built by the Romans.

If the traveller is tired with this tedious journey and dull description, which admits of no variety, we will stop for a moment, and refresh in this Roman city.

In drawing the flukes of his oar along the bed of the river, as he boats over it, he may feel the foundations of a Roman bridge, nearly level with its bottom. Joining the water are the vestiges of a castle, now an orchard. Roman coins are frequently discovered;—in 1765, I was presented with one of Vespasian's, found the year before in scouring a ditch; but I am sorry to observe, it has suffered more during the fifteen years in my possession, than during the fifteen hundred it lay in the earth.

The inhabitants being in want of materials to form a turnpike road, attempted to pull up this renowned military way, for the sake of those materials, but found them too strongly cemented to admit of an easy separation,

and therefore desisted when they had taken up a few loads.

I saw the section of this road cut up from the bottom: the Romans seem to have formed it with infinite labour and expense. They took out the soil for about twenty yards wide and one deep, perhaps till they came to a firm bottom, and filled up the whole with stones of all sizes, brought from Duffield, four miles up the river, cemented with coarse mortar.

The road here is only discoverable by its barren track along the cultivated meadows. It then proceeds over Morley Moor, through Scarsdale, by Chesterfield, Balsover, through Yorkshire, Northumberland, and terminates upon the banks of the Tyne, near Tinmouth.

There are many roads in England formed by the Romans; they were of two kinds, the military, which crossed the island; and the smaller, which extended from one town to another. The four I have mentioned come under the first class; they rather avoided, than led through a town, that they might not be injured by traffic.

Two of these four, the Watling Street, and the Ikenield Street, are thought, by their names, to be British, and with some reason: neither of the words are derived from the Latin: but whatever were their origin, they are certainly of Roman construction.

These great roads were begun as soon as the island was subdued, to employ the military, and awe the natives, and were divided into stages; at the end of each was a fort, or station, to accommodate the guard, for the reception of stores, the conveniency of marching parties, and to prevent the soldiers from mixing with the Britons.

The stations upon the Ikenield Street, in our neighbourhood, are Little Chester (Derwentone) a square fort,

nearly half an acre ; joining the road to the north, and the Derwent to the west.

The next is Burton upon Trent (*Ad Trivonam*) thirteen miles south. Here I find no remains of a station.

Then Wall (*Etocetum*) near Lichfield, which I have examined with great labour, or rather with great pleasure. Here the two famous consular roads cross each other. We should expect a fort in the angle, commanding both, which is not the case. The Watling Street is lost for about half a mile, leading over a morass, only the line is faintly preserved by a blind path over the inclosures: the Ikenield Street crosses it in this morass, not the least traces of which remain. But, by a strict attention, I could point out their junction to a few yards.

Six furlongs west of this junction, and one hundred yards north of the Watling Street, in a close, now about three acres, are the remains of the Roman fortress. This building, of strength and terror, is reduced to one piece of thick wall, visibly of Roman workmanship, from whence the place derives its modern name.

Can you, says I, to a senior peasant, for I love to appeal to old age, tell the origin of that building ?

“ No ; but we suppose it has been a church. The ruins were much larger in my memory ; but they were lately destroyed, to bring the land into that improved state of cultivation in which you see it.” And so you reduced a fortress in four years, which the Britons never could in four hundred. For a trifling profit, you erase the work of the ancients, and prevent the wonder of the moderns. Are you apprised of any old walls under the surface ?

“ Yes, the close is full of them ; I have broke three ploughs in one day ; no tool will stand against them. It has been more expensive to bring the land into its present condition, than the freehold is worth.” Why, you seem more willing to destroy, than your tools ; and more able than time.

The works which were the admiration of ages you bury under ground. What the traveller comes many miles to see, you assiduously hide.

What could be the meaning that the Romans erected their station on the declivity of this hill, when the summit, two hundred yards distant, is much more eligible; are there no foundations upon it? "None."

The commandry is preferable: the Watling Street runs by it, and it is nearer the Ikenield Street. Pray, are you acquainted with another Roman road which crosses it? "No."

Do you know any close about the village, where a narrow bed of gravel, which runs a considerable length, has impeded the plough?

"Yes, there is a place half a mile distant, where, when a child, I drove the plough; we penetrated a land of gravel, and my companion's grandfather told us it had been an old road." That is the place I want, lead me to it. Being already master of both ends of the road, like a broken line, with the centre worn out, the gravel bed enabled me to recover it.

The next station upon the Ikenield Street is Birmingham (Bremenium) I have examined this country with care; but find no vestiges of a station: nor shall we wonder, desolation is the preserver of antiquity, nothing of which reigns here; the most likely place is Wor-ston (Wall-stone) which a younger brother of Birmingham might afterwards convert into the fashionable moat of the times, and erect a castle. The next station is Alcester (Alauna) all which are nearly at equal distances.

In forming these grand roads, a straight direction seems to have been their leading maxim. Though curiosity has led me to travel many hundred miles upon their roads, with the eye of an inquirer, I cannot recollect one instance where they ever broke the line to avoid a hill, a swamp, a rock, or a river.



They were well acquainted with the propriety of an old English adage, *Once well done is twice done*; an idea newly clothed by Lord Chesterfield, *If a thing be worth doing at all, it is worth doing well*. For their roads were so durably constructed, that had they been appropriated only to the use intended, they might have withstood the efforts of time, and bid fair for eternity. Why is this useful art so lost among the moderns?

When time and intercourse had so far united the Romans and the Britons, that they approached nearly to one people the Romans formed or rather *improved*, many of the smaller roads; placed stones of intelligence upon them; hence London Stone, Stony Stratford (the stone at the Street-ford) Atherstone (hither, near, or first stone from Witherly Bridge, a Roman camp) and fixed their stations in their places to which these roads tended.

The great roads, as observed before, were chiefly appropriated for military purposes, and instituted in the beginning of their government; but the smaller were of later date, and designed for common use. As these came more in practice, there was less occasion for the military; which, not leading to their towns, were, in process of time, nearly laid aside.

Antonine, and his numerous train of commentators, have not bestowed that attention on the roads they deserve: a curious acquaintance with the roads of a country, brings us acquainted with the manners of the people: in one, like a mirror, is exactly represented the other. Their state, like a master key, unlocks many apartments.

The authors I have seen are *all in the wrong*; and as my researches are confined, it is a mortification, I am not able to set them right. They have confounded the two classes together, which were very distinct in chronology, the manner of making, and their use. If an author treats of one old road, he supposes himself bound to treat of all

in the kingdom, a task no man can execute by undertaking much, we do nothing well; the journey of an antiquarian should never be rapid. If fortune offers a small discovery, let him think and compare. Neither will they ever be set right, but continue to build a mouldering fabric, with untempered mortar, till a number of intelligent residents, by local inquiries can produce solid materials for a lasting monument.

The Romans properly termed their ways streets, a name retained by many of them to this day; one of the smaller roads, issued from London, penetrates through Stratford-upon-Avon (Street-ford) Monkspath Street, and Shirley Street, to Birmingham, which proves it of great antiquity; and the Ikenield Street running by it, proves it of greater. We may from hence safely conclude, Birmingham was a place of note in the time of Cæsar, because she merited legislative regard in forming their roads; which will send us far back among the Britons, to find her first existence.

Though we are certain the Ikenield Street passes about a mile in length through this parish, as described above; yet, as there are no Roman traces to be seen, I must take the curious traveller to that vast waste, called Sutton Coldfield, about four miles distant, where he will, in the same road, find the footsteps of those great masters of the world, marked in lasting characters.

He will plainly see its straight line pass over the Ridgeway, through Sutton Park, leaving the west hedge about two hundred yards to the left; through the remainder of Coldfield, till lost in cultivation.

This track is more than three miles in length, and is no where else visible in these parts. I must apprise him that its highest beauty is only discovered by an horizontal sun in the winter months.

I first saw it in 1762, relieved by the transverse rays, in

a clear evening in November; I had a perfect view upon the Ridgeway, near King's Standing, of this delightful scene. Had I been attacked by the chill blasts of winter upon this bleak mountain, the sensation would have been lost in the transport. The eye, at one view, takes in more than two miles. Struck with astonishment, I thought it the grandest I had ever beheld; and was amazed, so noble a monument of antiquity should be so little regarded.

The poets have long contended for the line of beauty—they may find it here. I was fixed as by enchantment till the sun dropped my prospect with it, and I left the place with regret.

If the industrious traveller chuses to wade up to the middle in gorse, as I did, he may find a roughish journey along this famous military way.

Perhaps this is the only road in which money is of no use to the traveller; for upon this barren wild he can neither spend it nor give it away.

He will perceive the Coldfield, about thirteen thousand acres, to be one vast bed of gravel, covered with a moderate depth of soil of eight or ten inches: during this journey of three miles, he will observe all the way, on each side, a number of pits, perhaps more than a thousand, out of which the Romans procured the gravel to form the road, none of them many yards from it. This great number of pits tends to prove two points—that the country was full of timber, which they not choosing to fell, procured the gravel in the interstices; for the road is composed of nothing else—and, that a great number of people were employed in its formation: they would also, with the trees properly disposed, which the Romans must inevitably cut to procure a passage, form a barrier to the road.

This noble production was designed by a master, is every where straight, and executed with labour and judgment.

Here he perceives the date of his own conquest, and of his civilization. Thus the Romans humbled a ferocious people.

If he chooses to measure it, he will find it exactly sixty feet wide, divided into three lands, resembling those in a ploughed field. The centre land thirty-six feet, and raised from one to three, according to the nature of the ground. The side lands, twelve each, and rising seldom more than one foot.

This centre land no doubt was appropriated for the march of the troops, and the small one on each side, for the out-guards, who preserved their ranks, for fear of a surprise from the vigilant and angry Britons.

The Romans held these roads in great esteem, and were severe in their laws for their preservation.

This famous road is visible all the way, but in some parts greatly hurt, and in others complete as in the first day the Romans made it. Perhaps the inquisitive traveller may find here the only monument in the whole island left us by the Romans, that *time* hath not injured.

The philosophical traveller may make some curious observations in the line of agriculture, yet in its infancy.

The only growth upon this wild, is gorse and ling; the vegetation upon the road and the adjacent lands, seem equal: the pits are all covered with a tolerable turf.

As this road has been made about one thousand seven hundred and thirty years, and, as at the time of making, both that and the pits must have been surfaces of neat gravel, he will be led to examine what degree of soil they have acquired in that long course of years, and by what means?

He well knows, that the surface of the earth is very far from being a fixed body; that there is a continual motion in every part, stone excepted; that the operations of the sun, the air, the frost, the dews, the winds, and the rain,



produce a constant agitation, which changes the particles and the pores, tends to promote vegetation, and to increase the soil to a certain depth.

This progress is too minute for the human eye, but the effects are visible. The powers above mentioned operate nearly as yeast in a lump of dough, that enlivens the whole. Nature seems to wish that the foot would leave the path, that she may cover it with grass. He will find this vegetative power so strong, that it even attends the small detached parts of the soil wherever they go, provided they are within reach of air and moisture : he will not only observe it in the small pots, appropriated for garden use, but on the tops of houses, remote from any road, where the wind has carried any small dust. He will also observe it in cracks of the rocks ; but in an amazing degree in the thick walls of ruined castles, where, by a long course of time, the decayed materials are converted into a kind of soil, and so well covered with grass, that if one of our old castle builders could return to his possessions, he might mow his house as well as his field, and procure a tolerable crop from both.

In those pits, upon an eminence, the soil will be found deep enough for any mode of husbandry. In those of the vallies, which take in the small drain of the adjacent parts, it is much deeper. That upon the road, which rather gives than receives any addition from drain, the average depth is about four inches.

The soil is not only increased by the causes above, but also by the constant decays of the growth upon it. The present vegetable generation falling to decay, adds to the soil, and also, assists the next generation, which in a short time follows the same course.

The author of the History of Sutton says, “ the poor inhabitants are supplied with fuel from a magazine of peat, near the Roman road, composed of thousands of

fir trees cut down by the Romans, to enable them to pass over a morass. The bodies of the trees are sometimes dug up sound, with the marks of the axe upon them."

Are we then to suppose, by this curious historical anecdote, that the inhabitants of Sutton have run away with this celebrated piece of antiquity? That the cart, instead of rolling *over* the military way, has rolled *under* it, and that they have boiled the pot with the Roman road?

Upon inquiry, they seemed more inclined to credit the fact, than able to prove it; but I can find no such morass, neither is the road any where broken up. Perhaps it would be as difficult to find the trees, as the axe that cut them. Besides, the fir is not a native of Britain, but of Russia; and I believe our forefathers, the Britons, were not complete masters of the art of transplanting. The park of Sutton was probably a bed of oaks; the natural weed of the country, long before Moses figured in history.

Whilst the political traveller is contemplating this extraordinary production of antiquity, of art, and of labour, his thoughts will naturally recur to the authors of it.

He will find them proficient in science, in ambition, in taste. They added dominion to conquest, till their original territory became too narrow a basis to support the vast fabric acquired by the success of their arms. The monstrous bulk fell to destruction by its own weight. Man was not made for universality; if he grasps at little, he may retain it; if at much, he may lose all. The confusion, natural on such occasions, produced anarchy. At that moment, the military stepped into the government, and the people became slaves.

Upon the ruins of this brave race, the Bishop of Rome founded an ecclesiastical jurisdiction. His power increasing with his votaries, he found means to link all christendom

to the triple crown, and acquired an unaccountable ascendancy over the human mind. The princes of Europe were harnessed, like so many coach horses. The pontiff directed the bridle. He sometimes used the whip, and sometimes the curse. The thunder of his throne rattled through the world with astonishing effect, until that most useful discovery, the art of printing, in the fifteenth century, dissolved the charm, and set the oppressed cattle at liberty, who began to kick their driver. Henry the VIII., of England, was the first unruly animal in the papal team, and the sagacious Cranmer assisted in breaking the shackles.

We have, in our day, seen an order of priesthood in the church of Rome, annihilated by the consent of the European princes, which the pope beheld in silence.

“There is an ultimate point of exaltation and reduction, beyond which human affairs cannot proceed.” Rome seems to have experienced both, for she is at this day one of the most contemptible states in the scale of empire.

This will of course lead the traveller's thoughts towards Britain, where he will find her sons by nature inclined to a love of arms, of liberty, and of commerce. These are the strong outlines of national character, the interior parts of which are finished with the softer touches of humanity, of science, and of luxury. He will also find, that there is a natural boundary to every country, beyond which it is dangerous to add dominion. That the boundary of Britain is the sea; that her external strength is her navy, which protects her frontiers, and her commerce; that her internal is unanimity: that when her strength is united within herself, she is invincible, and the balance of Europe will be fixed in her hand, which she ought never to let go.

But if she accumulates territory, though she may profit at first, she weakens her power by dividing it; for the more she sends abroad, the less will remain at home; and in-

stead of giving law to the tyrant, she may be obliged to receive law from him.

That, by a multiplicity of additions, her little isles will be lost in the great map of dominion.

That if she attempts to draw that vast and growing empire, America, she may herself be drawn to destruction ; for, by every law of attraction, the greater draws the less—the mouse was never meant to direct the ox. That the military and the ecclesiastical powers are necessary in their places, that is, subordinate to the civil.

But my companion will remember that Birmingham is our historical mark, therefore we must retreat to that happy abode of the smiling arts. If he has no taste for antiquity, I have detained him too long upon this hungry, though delightful spot. If he has, he will leave the enchanted ground with reluctance ; will often turn his head to repeat the view till the prospect is totally lost.

### *Lords of the Manor.*

By the united voice of our historians, it appears, that as the Saxons conquered province after province, which was effected in about one hundred and thirty years, the unfortunate Britons retreated into Wales. But we are not to suppose that all the inhabitants ran away, and left a desolate region to the victor ; this would have been of little more value to the conqueror, than the possession of Sutton Coldfield or Bromsgrove Lickey. The mechanic and the peasant were left, which are by far the greatest number—they are also the riches of a country ; stamp a value upon property, and it becomes current. As they have nothing to lose, so they have nothing to fear ; for let who will be master, they must be drudges. Their safety consists in their servitude ; the victor is ever conscious of their utility, therefore their protection is certain.

But the danger lies with the man of substance, and the



greater that substance, the greater his anxiety to preserve it, and the more danger to himself if conquered. These were the people who retreated into Wales. Neither must we consider the wealth of that day to consist of bags of cash, bills of exchange, India bonds, bank stock, &c. ; no such thing existed. Property lay in the land, and the herds that fed upon it. And here I must congratulate our Welch neighbours, who are most certainly descended from gentlemen; and I make no doubt but the Cambrian reader will readily unite in the same sentiment.

The Saxons, as conquerors, were too proud to follow the modes of the conquered, therefore they introduced government, laws, language, customs, and habits of their own. Hence we date the division of the kingdom into manors.

Human nature is nearly the same in all ages. Where value is marked upon property or power, it will find its votaries. Whoever was the most deserving, or rather could make the most interest, procured land sufficient for an elderman, now earl; the next class a manor; and the inferior, who had borne the heat and burthen of the day—nothing.

I must now introduce an expression which I promised not to forget. In the course of a trial between William de Birmingham and the inhabitants of Bromsgrove and King's Norton, in 1309, concerning the right of tollage, it appeared that the ancestors of the said William had a market here before the Norman conquest. This proves, that the family of Birmingham were of Saxon race, and lords of the manor prior to that period.

Mercia was not only the largest, but also the last of the seven conquered kingdoms. It was bounded on the north by the Humber, on the west by the Severn, on the south by the Thames, and on the east by the German Ocean. Birmingham lies nearly in the centre. Cridda, a Saxon,

came over with a body of troops, and reduced it in 582 ; therefore, as no after revolution happened that could cause Birmingham to change its owner, and as land was not in a very saleable state, there is the greatest reason to suppose the founder of the house of Birmingham came over with Cridda, as an officer in his army, and procured this little flourishing dominion as a reward for his service.

The succeeding generations of this illustrious family are too remote for historical penetration, till the reign of Edward the Confessor, the last of the Saxon kings, when we find, in 1050, Uluuine, (since Alwine, now Allen,) master of this improving spot.

*Richard, 1066,*

Seems to have succeeded him, and to have lived in that unfortunate period for property, the conquest.

The time was now arrived when this ancient family, with the rest of the English gentry, who had lived under the benign climate of Saxon government, and in the affluence of fortune, must quit the happy regions of hospitality, and enter the gloomy precincts of penury. From givers, they were to become beggars.

The whole conduct of William seems to have carried the strongest marks of conquest. Many of the English lost their lives, some their liberty, and nearly all their estates. The whole land in the kingdom was insufficient to satisfy the hungry Normans.

Perhaps William took the wisest method to secure the conquered country that could be devised by human wisdom : he parcelled out the kingdom among his greater barons ; the whole county of Chester is said to have fallen to the share of Hugh Lupus ; and these were subdivided into sixty-two thousand knight's fees, which were held under the great barons by military service. Thus the sovereign, by only signifying his pleasure to the barons, could instantly raise

an army for any purpose. We cannot produce a stronger indication of arbitrary government ; but, it is happy for the world, that perfection is found even in human wisdom ; for this well laid scheme destroyed itself. Instead of making the crown absolute, as was intended, it threw the balance into the hands of the barons, who became so many petty sovereigns, and a scourge to the king in after ages, till Henry the VII. sapped their power, and raised the third estate, the the commons, which quickly eclipsed the other two.

The English gentry suffered great distress. Their complaints rung loud in the royal ear, some of them therefore, who had been peaceable and never opposed the Normans, were suffered to enjoy their estates in dependence upon the great barons. This was the case with Richard, Lord of Birmingham, who held this manor by knight's-service of William Fitz-Auscult, Lord of Dudley Castle, and perhaps the land between the two places. Thus Birmingham, now rising towards the meridian of opulence, was a dependent upon Dudley Castle, now in ruins ; and thus an honourable family, who had enjoyed a valuable freehold, perhaps near five hundred years, were obliged to pay rent, homage, suit, and service, attend the Lord's Court at Dudley every three weeks, be called into the field at pleasure, and after all, possess a precarious tenure in villainage.

The blood of the ancient English was not only tainted with the breath of that destructive age, but their lands also. The powerful blast destroyed their ancient freehold tenures, reducing them into wretched copyholds ; and to the disgrace of succeeding ages, many of them retain this mark of Norman slavery to the present day. How defective are those laws, which give one man power over another in neutral cases ? That tend to promote quarrels, prevent cultivation, and which cannot draw the line between property and property ?

Though a spirit of bravery is certainly part of the British

character, yet there are two or three periods in English history, when this noble flame was totally extinguished. Every degree of resolution seems to have been cut off at the battle of Hastings. The English acted contrary to their usual manner:—danger had often made them desperate, but now it made them humble. This conquest is one of the most extraordinary held forth in history; the flower of nobility was wholly nipped off; the spirit of the English depressed, and having no head to direct, or hand to cultivate the courage of the people and lead it into action, it dwindled at the root, was trampled under the foot of tyranny, and, according to *Smollet*, several generations elapsed before any one of the old English stock blossomed into peerage.

It is curious to contemplate the revolution of things. Though the conquering Romans stood first in the annals of fame at the beginning of the Christian æra, yet they were a whole century in carrying their illustrious arms over the island, occupied only by a despicable race of Britons. Though the Saxons were invited, by one false step in politics, to assist the Britons in expelling an enemy, which gave them an opportunity of becoming enemies themselves; yet it was one hundred and thirty years before they could complete their conquest. And though the industrious Dane poured incessant numbers of people into Britain, yet it cost them two hundred years, and one hundred and fifty thousand men before they reduced it. But William, at one blow, finished the dreadful work, shackled her sons to his throne, and governed them with a sceptre of iron. Normandy, a petty dukedom, very little larger than Yorkshire, conquered a mighty nation in one day. England seems to have been taken by storm, and her liberties put to the sword. Nor did the miseries of this ill-fated kingdom end here, for the continental dominions, which William annexed to the crown, proved a whirlpool



for four hundred years, which drew the blood and treasure of the nation into its vortex, till those dominions were fortunately lost in the reign of Mary the I.

Thus the Romans spent one century in acquiring a kingdom, which they governed for four. The Saxons spent one hundred and thirty years, and ruled for four hundred and fifty-nine. The Danes spent two hundred and reigned twenty-five; but the Norman spent one day only, for a reign of seven hundred years. They continue to reign still.

It is easy to point out some families of Norman race, who yet enjoy the estates won by their ancestors at the battle of Hastings.

*William, 1130.*

Like his unfortunate father, was in a state of vassalage. The male line of the Fitz-Auscults soon became extinct, and Gervase Paganall marrying the heiress, became baron of Dudley Castle.

*Peter de Birmingham, 1154.*

It is common in every class of life, for the inferior to imitate the superior. If the real lady claims a head-dress sixteen inches high, that of the imaginary lady will immediately begin to thrive. The family, or surname, entered with William the I., and was the reigning taste of the day. A person was thought of no consequence without a surname; and even the depressed English, crept into the fashion, in imitation of their masters. I have already mentioned the Earl of Warwick, father of a numerous race now in Birmingham, whose name before the conquest was simply Turchill, but after Turchill de Arden (master of the woods) from his own estate. Thus the family of whom I speak, chose to dignify themselves with the name of *de Birmingham*.

Peter wisely consulted his own interest, kept fair with

Paganall his Lord, and obtained from him, in 1166, nine knight's fees which he held by military service. He also obtained a charter to hold a market on Thursday, weekly, from Henry the II., in the twelfth year of his reign.

A knight's fee, though uncommon now, was a word well understood six hundred years ago. It did not mean, as some have imagined, fifteen pounds per annum, nor any determinate sum; but as much land as would support a gentleman. This Peter was sewer to Paganall, (waited at his table) though a man of great property.

The splendour in which the great barons of that age lived, was little inferior to royalty.

The party distinctions also of Saxon and Norman in the twelfth century, began to die away, as the people became united by interest or marriage, like that of Whig and Tory, in the eighteenth. And perhaps there is not at present a native that does not carry in his veins the blood of the four nations that were grafted upon the Britons.

Peter himself lived in affluence at his castle, then near Birmingham, now the Moat, of which in the next section. He also obtained from Henry the II., as well as from Paganall the Lord paramount, several valuable privileges for his favourite inheritance of Birmingham. He bore for his arms, *azure, a bend lozenge*, of five points, *or*; the coat of his ancestors.

*William de Birmingham, 1216.*

At the reduction of Ireland, in the reign of Henry the II., a branch of this family, perhaps uncle to William, was very instrumental under Richard Strongbow, Earl of Pembroke, in accomplishing that great end; for which he was rewarded with a large estate, and the title of Earl of Lowth, both which continue in his family. Perhaps they are the only remains of this honourable house.

*William de Birmingham, 1246.*

By this time the male line of the Paganalls was worn out, and Roger de Someri marrying the heiress, became Baron of Dudley, with all its dependencies; but Someri and Birmingham did not keep peace, as their fathers had done. William, being very rich, forgot to ride to Dudley every three weeks, to perform suit and service at Someri's court. Whereupon a contest commenced to enforce the performance. But, in 1262, it was agreed between the contending parties that William should attend the lord's court only twice a-year, Easter and Michaelmas, and at such other times as the lord choose to command by special summons. This William, having married the daughter of Thomas de Astley, a man of great eminence, and both joining with the barons under Simon Mountfort, Earl of Leicester, against Henry the III., William fell in 1265, at the battle of Evesham; and as the loser is ever a rebel, the barons were proscribed, and their estates confiscated.

The manor of Birmingham, therefore valued at £40 per annum, was seized by the king, and given to his favourite, Roger de Clifford.

*William de Birmingham, 1265.*

By a law called the statute of Kenilworth, every man who had forfeited his estate to the crown, having taken up arms, had liberty to redeem his lands, by a certain fine: William therefore paid that fine, and recovered his inheritance of his family. He also, in 1283, strengthened his title by a charter from Edward the I., and likewise to the other manors he possessed, such as Stockton, in the County of Worcester; Shetford, in Oxfordshire; Maidencoat, in Berkshire; Hoggeston, in the county of Bucks; and Christleton in Cheshire.

In 1285, Edward brought his writ of quo warranto,

whereby every holder of land was obliged to shew by what title he held it. The consequence would have been dreadful to a prince of less prudence than Edward. Some shewed great unwillingness ; for a dormant title will not always bear examination ;—but William producing divers charters, clearly proved his right to every manorial privilege, such as market, toll, tem, sack, sok, infangenthief, weyfs, gallows, court-leet, and pillory, with a right to fix the standard for bread and beer ; all which were allowed.

William, Lord of Birmingham, being a military tenant, was obliged to attend the king into Gascoigne, 1297, where he lost his liberty at the siege of Bellgard, and was carried prisoner in triumph to Paris.

*William de Birmingham, 1306.*

This is the man who tried the right of tollage with the people of Bromsgrove and King's Norton.

*William de Birmingham, Lord Birmingham, 1316,*

Was knighted in 1325 ; well affected to Edward the II., for whose service he raised four hundred foot. Time seems to have put a period to the family of Someri, Lords of Dudley, as well as those of their predecessors, the Pagnalls, and the Fitz-Ausculfs.

In 1327, the first of Edward the III., Sir William was summoned to parliament, by the title of William Lord Birmingham, but not after.

It was not the fashion of that day to fill the House of Peers by patent. The greater barons held a local title from the baronies ; the possessor of one of these claimed a seat among the lords. I think they are now all extinct, except Arundel, the property of the Norfolk family, and and whoever is proprietor of Arundel Castle, is Earl thereof by ancient prescription.

The lesser barons were called up to the house by writ,



which did not confer an hereditary title. Of this class was the Lord of Birmingham.

Hugh Spencer, the favourite of the weak Edward the II., had procured the custody of Dudley Castle, with all its appendages, for his friend William, Lord Birmingham. Thus the family who had travelled from Birmingham to Dudley every three weeks, to perform humble suit at the lord's court, held that very court by royal appointment, to receive the fealty of others.

By the patent which constituted William keeper of Dudley Castle, he was obliged to account for the annual profits arising from the vast estate into the King's Exchequer. When, therefore, in 1334, he delivered in his accounts, the Barons refused to admit them, because the money was defective. But he had interest enough with the crown to cause a mandamus to be issued, commanding the barons to admit them.

*Sir Fouk de Birmingham, 1340.*

This man advanced to Sir Baldwin Freville, Lord of Tamworth, forty-eight marks, upon mortgage of five mills. The ancient coat of the *bend lozenge*, was now changed for the *partie per pale, indented, or, and gules*.

In 1352 and 1362, he was returned a member for the county of Warwick; also, in three or four succeeding parliaments.

*Sir John de Birmingham, 1376.*

Served the office of sheriff for the county of Warwick, in 1379, and was successively returned to serve in parliament for the counties of Warwick, Bedford, and Buckingham. He married the daughter of William de la Planch, by whom he had no issue. She afterwards married the Lord Clinton, retained the manor of Birmingham as her dower, and lived to the year 1424.

It does not appear in this illustrious family, that the regular line of descent, from father to son, was ever broken, from the time of the Saxons, till 1390. This Sir John left a brother, Sir Thomas de Birmingham, heir-at-law, who enjoyed the bulk of his brother's fortune ; but was not to possess the manor of Birmingham till the widow's death, which not happening till after his own, he never enjoyed it.

The Lord Clinton and his lady seem to have occupied the Manor House ; and Sir Thomas, unwilling to quit the place of his affections and of his nativity, erected a castle for himself at Worstone, near the Sand Pits, joining the Ikenield Street ; where, though the building is totally gone, the vestiges of its liquid security are yet complete. This Sir Thomas enjoyed several public offices, and figured in the style of his ancestors. He left a daughter, who married Thomas de la Roche, and from this marriage sprang two daughters ; the eldest of which married Edmund, Lord Ferrers of Chartley, who, at the decease of Sir John's widow, inherited the manor, and occupied the Manor House. There yet stands a building on the north-east side of the Moat, erected by this Lord Ferrers, with his arms in the timbers of the ceiling, and the crest, a horseshoe. I take this house to be the oldest in Birmingham, though it has not that appearance, having stood about three hundred and sixty years.

By an entail of the manor upon the male line, the Lady Ferrers seems to have quitted her title in favour of a second cousin, a descendant of William de Birmingham, brother to Sir Fouk.

*William de Birmingham, 1430,*

In the the nineteenth of Henry the VI., 1441, is said to have held his manor of Birmingham, of Sir John Sutton, Lord of Dudley, by military service ; but instead of pay-

ing homage, fealty, escuage, &c. as his ancestors had done, which was very troublesome to the tenant, and brought only empty honour to the lord: and, as sometimes the lord's necessities taught him to think that money was more *solid* than suit and service, an agreement was entered into, for money instead of homage, between the lord and the tenant. Such agreements now became common. Thus land became a kind of bastard freehold;—the tenant held a certainty while he conformed to the agreement: or, in other words, the custom of the manor; and the lord still possessed a material control. He died in 1479, leaving a son.

*Sir William Birmingham, 1479,*

Aged thirty at the decease of his father. He married Isabella, heiress of William Hilton, by whom he had a son, William, who died before his father, June 7, 1502, leaving a son.

*Edward Birmingham, 1500.*

Born in 1497, and succeeded his grandfather at the age of three. During his minority, Henry the VII., 1500, granted the wardship to Edward, Lord Dudley.

The family estate then consisted of the manors of Birmingham, Over Warton, Nether Warton, Mock Tew, Little Tew, and Shutford in the county of Oxford, Hogges-ton in Bucks, and Billesley in the county of Worcester. Edward afterwards married Elizabeth, widow of William Ludford of Annesley, by whom he had one daughter, who married a person of the name of Atkinson.

But after the peaceable possession of a valuable estate for thirty-seven years; the time was now arrived, when the mounds of justice must be broken down by the weight of power, a whole deluge of destruction enter, and overwhelm an ancient and illustrious family, in the person of an inno-

cent man. The world would view the diabolical transaction with amazement, none daring to lend assistance to the unfortunate ; not considering that property should ever be under the protection of law ; and, what was Edward's case to-day, might be that of any other man to-morrow. But the oppressor kept fair with the crown, and the crown held a rod of iron over the people. Suffer me to tell the mournful tale from Dugdale's *Antiquities of Warwickshire*.

1537.

JOHN DUDLEY, Duke of NORTHUMBERLAND, a man of great wealth, unbounded ambition, and one of the basest characters of the age, was possessor of Dudley Castle, and the fine estate belonging to it. He wished to add Birmingham to his vast domain. Edward Birmingham therefore was privately sounded, respecting the disposal of his manor ; but as money was not wanted, and as the place had been the honour and the residence of his family for many centuries, it was out of the reach of purchase.

Northumberland was so charmed with its beauty, he was determined to possess it ; and perhaps the manner in which he accomplished his design, cannot be paralleled in the annals of infamy.

He procured two or three rascals of his own temper, and rather of mean appearance, to avoid suspicion, to take up their quarters for a night or two in Birmingham, and gain secret intelligence when Edward Birmingham should ride out, and what road. This done, one of the rascals was to keep before the others, but all took care that Edward should easily overtake them. Upon his arrival at the first class, the villains joined him, entered into chat, and all moved soberly together till they reached the first man ; when, on a sudden, the strangers with Edward drew their pistols and robbed their brother villain, who no doubt lost a considerable sum after a decent resistance. Edward was



easily known, apprehended, and committed as one of the robbers ; the others were not to be found.

Edward immediately saw himself on the verge of destruction. He could only *allege*, but not *prove* his innocence. All the proof the case could admit of was against him.

Northumberland (then only Lord L'Isle) hitherto had succeeded to his wish ; nor was Edward long in suspense. Private hints were given him, that the only way to save his life, was to make Northumberland his friend ; and this probably might be done, by resigning him his manor of Birmingham ; with which the unfortunate Edward reluctantly complied.

Northumberland thinking a conveyance insufficient, caused Edward to yield his estate into the hands of the king, and had interest enough in that age of injustice to procure a ratification from a weak parliament, by which means he endeavoured to throw the odium off his own character and fix it upon theirs, and also to procure to himself a safer title.

An extract from that base act is as follows :—

“ Whereas Edward Byrmingham, late of Byrmingham in the countie of Warwick, Esquire, otherwise callid Edward Byrmingham, Esquire, ys and standyth lawfully indettid to our soverene Lord the Kinge, in diverse grete summes of money ; and also standyth at the mercy of his Highness, for that the same Edward ys at this present convected of felony ; Our seide soverene Lord the Kinge ys contentid and pleasid, that for and in recompence and satisfaction to his Grace of the seyde summes of money, to accept and take of the seyde Edward the mannour and lordship of Byrmingham, otherwise called Byrmincham, with the appartinances, lying and being in the countie of Warwick, and all and singuler other lands and tenements, reversions, rents, services, and hereditaments of the same Edward Byrmingham, set, lying and beyng in the countie of War-

wick aforesaid. Be yt therefore ordeyned and enacted, by the authoritie of this present parliament, that our seyde soverene Lord the Kinge shall have, hold, and enjoy, to him and his heires and assigns for ever, the seyde mannour and lordship of Byrmingham, &c.”

In the act there is a reservation of £40 per annum, during the lives of the said Edward and his wife.

It appears also by an expression in the act, that Edward was brought to trial, and found guilty. Thus innocence is depressed for want of support ; property is wrested for want of the protection of the law ; and a vile minister, in a corrupt age, can carry an infamous point through a court of justice, the two houses of Parliament, and complete his horrid design by the sanction of a tyrant.

The place where tradition tells us this diabolical transaction happened, is the middle of Sandy Lane, in the Sutton Road ; the upper part of which begins at the North-east corner of Aston Park wall ; at the bottom you bear to the left, for Sawford Bridge, or to the right, for Nachell's Green ; about two miles from the Moat, the place of Edward's abode.

Except that branch which proceeded from this original stem, about six hundred years ago, of which the Earl of Lowth is head, I know of no male descendant from this honourable stock ; who, if we allow the founder to have come over with Cridda, the Saxon, in 582, must have commanded this little sovereignty nine hundred and fifty-five years.

I met with a person some time ago of the name of Birmingham, and was pleased with the hope of finding a member of that ancient and honourable house ; but he proved so amazingly ignorant, he could not tell whether he was from the clouds, the sea, or the dunghill ; instead of tracing the existence of his ancestors, even so high as his father, he was scarcely conscious of his own.

As this house did not much abound with daughters, I cannot at present recollect any families among us except that of Bracebridge, who are descended from this illustrious origin, by a female line ; and Sir John Talbot Dillon, who is descended from the ancient Earls of Lowth, as he is from the De Veres, the more ancient Earls of Oxford.

Here, then, I unwillingly extinguish that long range of lights, which for many ages illuminated the house of Birmingham. But I cannot extinguish the rascality of the line of Northumberland. This unworthy race proved a scourge to the world, at least during three generations. Each, in his turn, presided in the British cabinet, and each seems to have possessed the villainy of his predecessor, united with his own. The first only *served* a throne ; but the second and third intended to *fill* one. A small degree of ambition warms the mind in pursuit of fame through the paths of honour ; while too large a portion tends to unfavourable directions, kindles to a flame, consumes the finer sensations of rectitude, and leaves a stench behind.

Edmund, the father of this John, was the voracious leech, with Empson, who sucked the vitals of the people, to feed the avarice of Henry the VII. It is singular that Henry, the most sagacious prince since the conquest, loaded him with honours for filling the royal coffers with wealth, which the penurious monarch never durst enjoy ; but his successor, Henry the VIII. enjoyed the pleasure of consuming that wealth, and *executed* the father for collecting it ! How much are our best laid schemes defective ? How little does expectation and event coincide ? It is no disgrace to a man that he died on the scaffold ; the question is, what brought him there ? Some of the most inoffensive, and others the most exalted characters of the age in which they lived, have been cut off by the axe, as Edward Plantagenet, Earl of Warwick, for being the last male heir of the Anjouvin Kings ; John Fisher, Bishop of

Rochester, Sir Thomas Moore, Sir Walter Raleigh, Algernon Sidney, William Lord Russell, &c. whose blood ornamented the scaffold on which they fell.

The son of this man, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, favourite of Queen Elizabeth, is held up by historians as a master-piece of dissimulation, pride, and cruelty. He married three wives, all of which he is charged with sending to the grave by untimely deaths; one of them, to open a passage to the queen's bed, to which he aspired. It is surprising that he should deceive the penetrating eye of Elizabeth; but I am much inclined to think she *knew him* better than the world; and they knew him rather too well. He ruined many of the English gentry, particularly the ancient family of Arden, of Park Hall, in this neighbourhood. He afterwards ruined his own family by disinheriting a son, more worthy than himself. If he did not fall by the executioner, it is no proof that he did not deserve it.—We now behold

*John Duke of Northumberland, 1537.*

Lord of the manor of Birmingham; a man, who of all others the least deserved that honour; or rather, deserved the axe for being so.

Some have asserted, “that property acquired by dishonesty cannot prosper.” But I shall leave the philosopher and the enthusiast to settle that point, while I go on to observe, that the lordship of Birmingham did not prosper with the Duke. Though he had, in some degree, the powers of government in his hands, he had also the clamours of the people in his ears. What were his inward feelings, is uncertain at this distance—fear seems to have prevented him from acknowledging Birmingham for his property. Though he exercised every act of ownership, yet he suffered the fee simple to rest in the crown till nine



years had elapsed, and those clamours subsided, before he ventured to accept the grant in 1546.

As the execution of this grant was one of the last acts of Henry's life, we should be apt to suspect the duke carried it in his pocket ready for signing, but deferred the matter as long as he could with safety, that distance of time might annihilate reflection; and that the king's death, which happened a few weeks after, might draw the attention of the world too much, by the importance of the event, to regard the Duke's conduct.

The next six years, which carries us through the reign of Edward the VI., is replete with the intrigues of this illustrious knave. He sought connexions with the principal families; he sought honours for his own; he procured a match between his son, the Lord Guildford Dudley, and the Lady Jane Grey, daughter of the Duke of Suffolk, and a descendant from Henry the VII., with intent of fixing the crown in his family, but failing in the attempt, he brought ruin upon the Suffolk family, and himself to the block, in the first of Queen Mary, 1523.

Though a man be guilty of many atrocious acts that deserve death, yet in the hour of distress, humanity demands the tear of compassion; but the case was otherwise at the execution of John, Duke of Northumberland, for a woman near the scaffold held forth a bloody handkerchief and exclaimed, "Behold the blood of the Duke of Somerset, shed by your means, and which cries for vengeance against you."

Thus Northumberland kept a short and rough possession of glory; thus he fell unlamented; and thus the manor of Birmingham reverted to the crown a second time, the duke himself having first taught it the way.

Birmingham continued two years in the crown, till the third of Queen Mary, when she granted it to

*Thomas Marrow, 1555,*

Whose family, for many descents, resided at Berkswell, in this county.

In the possession of the high bailiff is a bushel measure, cast in brass, of some value; round which in relief is, **SAMUEL MARROW, LORD OF THE MANOR OF BIRMINGHAM, 1664.**

The lordship continued in this family about one hundred and ninety-one years, till the male line failing, it became the joint property of four co-heirs:—Ann, married to Sir Arthur Kaye; Mary, the wife of John Knightley, Esq.; Ursulla, the wife of Sir Robert Wilmot: and Arabella, unmarried; who, in about 1730, disposed of the private estate in the manor, amounting to about £400 per annum, to Thomas Sherlock, Bishop of London, as before observed, and the manor itself to

*Thomas Archer, Esq., for £1700, in 1746,*

Of an ancient family, who have resided at Umberslade, in this county, more than six hundred years; from him it descended to

*Andrew, Lord Archer,*

Who died about 1778, leaving the manor to his three daughters, one of whom married the Earl of Plymouth. Christopher Musgrave, Esq., who married another of the daughters, possesses the royalty of the manor, with very few of its emoluments; he having sold, about seven years ago, to the town commissioners, the market rights, for £12,500, now worth £45,000. The produce of the market tolls, for the year ending June, 1834, was £302l 15s. 2d. The expenses of collection, &c., for the same period, £669 9s. 2d.; nett income, £2352 6s. As it does not appear that the subsequent lords, after the extinction of

the house of Birmingham, were resident upon the manor, I omit particulars. Let me remark, this place yet gives title to the present Lord Viscount Dudley and Ward, as descended, by the female line, from the great Norman Barons, the Fitz-Auscults, the Paganalls, the Somerys, the Suttons, and the Dudleys, successive lords paramount, whose original power is reduced to a name.

*Manor House, (the Moat.)*

The natural temper of the human mind, like that of the brute, is given to plunder. This temper is very apt to break forth into action. In all societies of men, therefore, restraints have been discovered, under the name of laws, attended with punishment, to deter people from infringing each others property. Every thing that a man can possess, falls under the denomination of property; whether it be life, liberty, wealth, or character.

The less perfect these laws are, the less a people are removed from the rude state of nature, and the more necessity there is for a man to be constantly in a state of defence, that he may be able to repel any force that shall rise up against him.

It is easy to discover, by the laws of a country, how far the people are advanced in civilization. If the laws are defective, or the magistrate too weak to execute them, it is dangerous for a man to possess property.

But when a nation is pretty far advanced in social existence; when the laws agree with reason, and are executed with firmness, a man need not trouble himself concerning the protection of his property—his country will protect it for him.

The laws of England, have for many ages, been gradually refining; and are capable of that protection which violence never was. But if we penetrate back into the recesses of

time, we shall find the laws inadequate, the manners savage, force occupy the place of justice, and property unprotected. In those barbarous ages, men sought security by intrenching themselves from a world they could not trust. This was done by opening a large trench round their habitation, which they filled with water, and which was only approachable by a draw-bridge. This, in some degree, supplied the defect of the law, and the want of power in the magistrate. It also, during the iron reign of priesthood, furnished that table in lent, which it guarded all the year.

The Britons had a very slender knowledge of fortification. The camps they left us, are chiefly upon eminences, girt by a shallow ditch, bordered with stone, earth, or timber, but never with water. The moat was introduced by the Romans ; their camps are often in marshes, some wholly, and some in part surrounded by water.

These liquid barriers were begun in England early in the Christian era, they were in the zenith of their glory at the barons' wars, in the reign of King John, and continued to be the mode of fortification till the introduction of guns, in the reign of Edward the IV., which shook their foundation ; and the civil wars of Charles the I. totally annihilated their use, after an existence of twelve hundred years.

Perhaps few parishes that have been the ancient habitation of a gentleman, are void of some traces of these fluid bulwarks. That of Birmingham has three ; one of these, of a square form, at Warstone, erected by a younger brother of the house of Birmingham, has already been mentioned.

Another is the parsonage-house belonging to St. Martin's, formerly situated in the road to Bromsgrove, now Smallbrook Street, of a circular figure, and supplied by a neighbouring spring. If we allow this watery circle to be



a proof of the great antiquity of the house, it is a much greater with regard to the antiquity of the church.

The third is what we simply denominated the Moat, and was the residence of the ancient lords of Birmingham, situated about sixty yards south of the church, and twenty west of Digbeth. This was also circular, and supplied by a small stream that crossed the road to Bromsgrove, near the first mile stone ; it originally ran into the river Rea, near Vaughton's hole, dividing the parishes of Birmingham and Edgbaston all the way ; but at the formation of the Moat was diverted from its course, into which it is now returned.

No certain evidence remains to inform us when this liquid work was accomplished : perhaps in the Saxon heptarchy, when there were few or no buildings south of the church. Digbeth seems to have been one of the first streets added to this important school of arts ; the upper part of that street must of course have been formed first ; but that the moat was completed prior to the erection of any buildings between that and Digbeth, is evident, because those buildings stand upon the very soil thrown out in forming the Moat.

The first certain account that we meet with of this guardian circle, is the reign of Henry the II., 1154, when Peter de Birmingham, then lord of the fee, had a castle here, and lived in splendour. All the succeeding lords resided upon the same island, till their cruel expulsion, by John, Duke of Northumberland, in 1537.

The old castle followed its lords, and is buried in the ruins of time. Upon the spot, about 1740, rose a house in the modern style, occupied by a manufacturer (Thomas Francis) ; in one of the outbuildings was shewn, the apartment where the ancient lords kept their court leet ; another out-building which stood to the east, I have already observed was the work of Edmund Lord Ferrers.

The trench being filled with water, had nearly the same appearance then, as perhaps, a thousand years before, but not altogether the same use. It at first served to protect its master, but then to turn a thread-mill.

### *Pudding Brook.*

Near the place where the small rivulet discharged itself into the Moat, another of the same size was carried over it, and proceeded from the town as this advanced towards it, producing a curiosity seldom met with; one river running south, and the other north, for half-a-mile, yet only a path-road of three feet asunder; which surprised Brindley, the famous engineer.

The Moat having been filled up to form Smithfield Market-Place, the stream that did supply it with water is now returned to its original channel, and the continuations of Hurst and Essex Streets, with some new ones having been formed, crossing Pudding Brook (a common sewer to convey filth from the town, hence its name) at nearly right angles; this drain will of course be conveyed under cover in future.

### *The Priory.*

The site of this ancient edifice is now the square; some small remains of the old foundations are yet visible in the cellars, chiefly on the south-east. The out-buildings and pleasure-grounds perhaps occupied the whole north-east side of Bull Street, then uninhabited, and only the highway to Wolverhampton; bounded on the north-west by Steelhouse Lane, on the north-east by Newton and John's Street, and on the south-east by Dale End, which also was no other than the highway to Lichfield. The whole about fourteen acres.

The building upon this delightful eminence, which at

that time commanded the small but beautiful prospect of Bristland-Fields, Rowley Hills, Oldbury, Smethwick, Handsworth, Sutton Coldfield, Erdington, Saltley, the Garrison, and Camp Hill, which then stood at a distance from the town, though now near its centre, was founded by the house of Birmingham, in the early reigns of the Norman kings, and called the Hospital of St. Thomas—the priest being bound to pray for the souls of the founders every day, to the end of the world.

In 1285, Thomas de Madenhache, lord of the manor of Aston, gave ten acres of land in his manor. William de Birmingham ten, which I take to be the land where the priory stood; and Ranulph de Rakeby three acres, in Saltley. About the same time, sundry others gave houses and land in smaller quantities. William de Birmingham gave afterwards twenty-two acres more. The same active spirit seems to have operated in our ancestors five hundred years ago, that does in their descendants at this day. If a new scheme strikes the fancy, it is pursued with vigour.

The religious fervour of that day ran high; it was unfashionable to leave the world, and not remember the Priory. Donations crowded in so fast, that the prohibiting act was forgot; so that in 1311, the brotherhood were prosecuted by the crown, for appropriating lands contrary to the act of mortmain; but these interested priests, like their sagacious brethren, knew as well how to preserve as to gain property; for upon their humble petition to the throne, Edward the II. put a stop to the judicial proceedings, and granted a special pardon.

In 1351, Fouk de Birmingham, and Richard Spencer, jointly gave to the priory one hundred acres of land, part lying in Aston, and part in Birmingham, to maintain another priest, who should celebrate divine service daily at the altar of the Virgin Mary, in the church of the hospital, for the souls of William la Mercer and his wife.

The church is supposed to have stood upon the spot now No. 27, in Bull Street.

In the garden belonging to the Red Bull, No. 83, nearly opposite, have been discovered human bones, which has caused some to suppose it the place of interment for the religious, belonging to the priory, which I rather doubt. The cemetery must have extended north to the Minories. leading to the square, for in the premises of Charles Greatrex, many bushels of human bones were dug up in 1786, in great perfection, the polish of the teeth remaining.

At the dissolution of the abbies, in 1536, the king's visitors valued the annual income at the trifling sum of 8*l.* 8*s.* 9*d.*

The patronage continued chiefly in the head of the Birmingham family. Dugdale gives us a list of some of the priors, who held dominion in this little commonwealth, from 1326, till the total annihilation, being two hundred and ten years.

Robert Marmion,	Robert Browne,
Robert Cappe,	John Port,
Thomas Edmunds,	William Priestwood,
John Frothward,	Henry Drayton,
John Cheyne,	Sir Edward Tofte,
Henry Bradley,	Thomas Salpin.
Henry Hody,	

Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex, a man of much honour, more capacity, and yet more spirit, was the instrument with which Henry the VIII. destroyed the abbies ; but Henry, like a true politician of the house of Tudor, wisely threw the blame upon the instrument, held it forth to the public in an odious light, and then sacrificed it to appease an angry people.

This destructive measure against the religious houses.



originated from royal lechery, and was replete with consequences.

It opened the fountains of learning, at that day confined to the monastery, and the streams diffused themselves through various ranks of men. The revival of letters and of science made a rapid progress. It soon appeared that the stagnate knowledge of the priest was abundantly mixed with error; but now, running through the laity, who had no private interest to serve, it became more pure.

It removed great numbers of men, who lay as a dead weight upon the community, and they became useful members of society. When younger sons could no longer find an asylum within the gloomy walls of a convent, they sought a livelihood in trade. Commerce, therefore, was taught to crowd her sails, cross the western ocean, fill the country with riches, and change an idle spirit into that of industry.

By the destruction of religious houses, architecture sustained a temporary wound. They were by far the most magnificent and expensive buildings in the kingdoms, far surpassing those of the nobility; some of these structures are yet habitable, though the major part are gone to decay. But modern architecture hath since out-done the former splendour of the abbey, in use and elegance, and sometimes with the profits arising from the abbey lands.

It also shut the door of charity against the impostor, the helpless, and the idle, who had found here their chief supply; and gave rise to one of the best laws ever invented by human wisdom, that of each parish supporting its own poor.

By the annihilation of abbots, the church lost its weight in parliament, and the vote was thrown into the hands of the temporal lords.

It prevented, in some degree, the extinction of families;

for, instead of younger branches becoming the votaries of a monastic life, they became votaries of hymen : hence the kingdom was enriched by population. It eased the people of a set of masters, who had for ages ruled them with a rod of iron.

The hands of superstition were also weakened, for the important science of astrology, miracle, and divination, supported by the cell, have been losing ground ever since.

It likewise recovered vast tracts of land out of dead hands, and gave an additional vigour to agriculture, unknown to former ages. The monk, who had only a temporary tenancy, could not give a permanent one ; therefore the lands were neglected, and the produce was small ; but these lands falling into the hands of the gentry, acquired an hereditary title. It was their interest to grant leases, for a superior rent ; and it was the tenant's interest to give that rent for the sake of security. Hence the produce of land is become one of the most advantageous branches of British commerce.

Henry, by this seizure, had more property to give away than any King of England since William the Conqueror, and he generously gave away that which was never his own. It is curious to survey the foundation of some of the principal religions that have taken the lead among men.

Moses founded a religion upon morals and ceremonies, one half of which continues with his people to this day.

Christ founded one upon *love* and *purity* ; words of the simplest import, yet we sometimes mistake their meaning.

The Bishop of Rome erected his upon deceit and oppression ; hence the treasures of knowledge were locked up, an inundation of riches and power flowed into the church,

with destructive tendency. And Henry the VIII. built his reformation upon revenge and plunder; he deprived the *head* of the Romish see of an unjust power, for pronouncing a just decision, and robbed the *members* for being annexed to that head. Henry wished the world to believe what he believed himself, that he acted from a religious principle; but his motive seems to have been *savage love*. Had equity directed when Henry divided this vast property, he would have restored it to the descendants of those persons, whose mistaken zeal had injured their families; but his disposal of it was ludicrous—sometimes he made a free gift, at others he exchanged a better estate for a worse, and then gave that worse to another.

I have met with a little anecdote which says, “that Henry being upon a tour in Devonshire, two men waited on him to beg certain lands in that county; while they attended in the anti-room for the royal presence, a stranger approached, and asked them a trifling question; they answered, they wished to be alone—at that moment the king entered. They fell at his feet; the stranger seeing them kneel, knelt with them. They asked the favour intended; the king readily granted it; they bowed; the stranger bowed also. By this time, the stranger perceiving there was a valuable prize in the question, claimed his thirds: they denied his having any thing to do with the matter. He answered, he had done as much as they, for they only asked and bowed, and he did the same. The dispute grew warm, and both parties agreed to appeal to the king, who answered, he took them for joint beggars, therefore had made them a joint present. They were then obliged to divide the land with the stranger, whose share amounted to £240 per annum.”

The land formerly used for the Priory of Birmingham, is now the property of many persons. Upon that spot whereon stood one solitary house, now stand about four

hundred. Upon that ground where about thirty persons lived upon the industry of others, about three thousand live upon their own. The place, which lay as a heavy burthen upon the community, now tends to enrich it, by adding its mite to the national commerce, and the national treasury.

In 1775, I took down an old house of wood and plaister, which had stood two hundred and eight years, having been erected in 1567, thirty-one years after the dissolution of the abbies. The foundation of this old house seemed to have been built chiefly with stones from the priory; perhaps more than twenty waggon loads; these appeared in a variety of forms and sizes, highly finished in the Gothic taste, parts of porticos, arches, windows, ceilings, &c., some fluted, some cyphered, and otherwise ornamented, yet complete as in the first day they were left by the chisel. The greatest part of them were destroyed by the workmen; some others I used again in the fireplace of an under kitchen. Perhaps they are the only perfect fragments that remain of that venerable edifice, which once stood the monument of ancient piety, the ornament of the town, and the envy of the priest out of place.

#### *Clodshale's Chantry.*

It is an ancient remark, "the world is a farce." Every generation and perhaps every individual, acts a part in disguise; but when the curtain falls, the hand of the historian pulls off the mask, and displays the character in its native light. Every generation differs from the other, *yet all are right*. Time, fashion, and sentiment, change together. We laugh at the oddity of our forefathers—our successors will laugh at us.

The prosperous anvil of Walter de Clodshale, a native of this place, had enabled him to acquire several estates in



Birmingham, to purchase the lordship of Saltley, commence gentleman, and reside in the manor-house, now gone to decay, though its traces remain, and are termed by common people, *The Giant's Castle*. This man, having well provided for the *present*, thought it prudent, at the close of life, to provide for the *future*: he therefore procured a license, in 1331, from William de Birmingham, lord of the fee, and another from the crown, to found a chantry at the altar in St. Martin's church, for one priest, to pray for his soul and that of his wife.

He gave, that he might be safely wafted into the arms of felicity, by the breath of a priest, four houses, twenty acres of land, and eighteen-pence rent, issuing out of his estates in Birmingham.

The same righteous motive induced his son Richard, in 1348, to grant five houses, ten acres of land, and ten shillings rent, from the Birmingham estates, to maintain a second priest, who was to secure the souls of himself and his wife. The declaration of Christ, in that pious age, seems to have been inverted; for instead of its being difficult for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven, it was difficult for him to miss it. We are not told what became of him who had nothing to give! If the profits of the estate tended the right way, perhaps there was no great concern which way either *Walter* or *Richard* tended.

The chantorial music continued two hundred and four years, till 1535, when Henry the VIII. closed the book, turned out the priests, who were Sir Thomas Allen and Sir John Green, and seized the property, valued at £5 1s. per annum. Permit me again to moralize upon this fashionable practice of ruining the family for the health of the soul; except some lawful creditor puts in a claim, which justice ought to allow, a son has the same right to an estate, after the death of his father, as that father had before him.

Had Walter and Richard taken *equal* care of their souls and their estates, the first might have been as safe as in the hands of the priest, and the last, at this day, have been the property of that ancient, and once noble race, of Arden, long since in distress ; who, in 1426, married the heiress of their house. Thus a family, benefited by the hammer, was injured by the church.

Had the hands of these two priests ministered to their wants, in the construction of tents and fishing-nets, like those of their predecessors, St. Paul and St. Peter, though their pride would have been eclipsed, their usefulness would have shone, and the world have been gainers by their labour. Two other lessons may be learnt from this little ecclesiastical history.

The astonishing advance of landed property in Birmingham : nine houses and thirty acres of land, two hundred and fifty years ago, were valued at the trifling rent of £4 9s. 6d., one of the acres, or one of the houses, would at this day bring more. We may reasonably suppose they were under-rated ; yet, even then, the difference is amazing. An acre, within a mile of Birmingham, now sells for about one hundred pounds, and lets from three pounds to five, some as high as seven.

And the nation so over swarmed with ecclesiastics, that the spiritual honours were quickly devoured, and the race left hungry ; they therefore fastened upon the temporal. Hence we boast of two knighted priests.

### *John-a-Dean's Hole.*

At the bottom of Digbeth, about thirty yards north of the bridge, on the left, is a water course that takes in a small drain from Digbeth, but more from the adjacent meadows, and which divides the parishes of Aston and Birmingham, called John-a-Dean's Hole ; from a person of that name who is said to have lost his life there

and which, I think, is the only name of antiquity among us.

The particle *de*, between the christian and surname, is of French extraction, and came over with William the I. It continued tolerably pure for about three centuries, when it in some degree assumed an English garb, in the particle *of*; the *a* therefore, is only a corruption of the latter. Hence the time of this unhappy man's misfortune may be fixed about the reign of Edward the III.

### *Lench's Trust.*

In the reign of Henry the VIII., William Lench, a native of this place, bequeathed his estate for the purpose of erecting alms-houses, which are those at the bottom of Steelhouse Lane, for the benefit of poor widows, but chiefly for repairing the streets of Birmingham. Afterwards others granted smaller donations for the same use, but all were included under the name of Lench; and I believe did not unitedly amount, at that time, to fifteen pounds per annum.

Over this scattered inheritance was erected a trust, consisting of gentlemen in the neighbourhood of Birmingham.

All human affairs tend to confusion. The hand of care is ever necessary to keep order. The gentlemen, at the head of this charity, having too many modes of pleasures of their own, to pay attention to this little jurisdiction, disorder crept in apace; some of the lands were lost for want of inspection; the rents ran in arrear, and were never recovered; the streets were neglected, and the people complained.

Misconduct, particularly of a public nature, silently grows for years, and sometimes for ages, till it becomes too bulky for support, falls in pieces by its own weight, and out of its very destruction rises a remedy. An order,

from the Court of Chancery was obtained, for vesting the property in other hands, consisting of twenty persons, all of Birmingham, who have directed this valuable estate (which was in 1791, £300 per annum, and now, 1835, upwards of £700) to useful purposes. The man who can guide his own private concerns with success, stands the fairest chance of guiding those of the public.

If the former trust went widely astray, perhaps their successors have not exactly kept the line, by advancing the leases to a rack rent. It is worth considering whether the tenant of an expiring lease has not in equity, a kind of reversionary right, which ought to favour him with the refusal of another term, at one third under the value, in houses, and one fourth in land ; this would give stability to the title, secure the rents, and cause the lessee more cheerfully to improve the premises, which in time would enhance their value, both with regard to property and esteem. But where business is well conducted, complaint should cease, for perfection is not to be expected on this side the grave.

There is an excellent clause in the deviser's will, ordering his bailiff to pay half-a-crown to any persons, who, having quarrelled and entered into law, shall stop judicial proceedings, and make peace by agreement. He might have added, " and half-a-crown to the lawyer that will suffer them." If money be reduced to one fourth its value, since the days of Lench, it follows, that four times the sum ought to be paid in ours ; and perhaps ten shillings cannot be better laid out, than in the purchase of that peace which tends to harmonize the community, and weed a brotherhood not the most amicable among us. There are now, 1835, alms-houses built and supported by the funds vested in this trust, in Steelhouse Lane, containing forty-two rooms ; Dudley Street, thirty-eight ; Park Street, thirty-two ; and Hospital Street, thirty-four ; total number



of apartments, one hundred and forty-six. Each room is occupied by one person, who receives £1 5s. annually, by quarterly instalments. The great age of the parties makes it necessary for them to have some one with them, or they do so from choice, so that the number of poor persons occupying these rooms is nearly doubled. The united ages of the one hundred and forty-six tenants, amounts to nearly twelve thousand. The average being about eighty. The most needy and the oldest applicants are preferred. The value of the trust, which has been augmented by sundry other bequests, is now about £700 per annum, with a prospect of considerable increase.

The members choose annually, out of their own body, two bailiffs.

#### *Fentham's Trust.*

In 1712, George Fentham, of Birmingham, devised his estates by will, consisting of about one hundred acres, in Errington and Handsworth, of the value then of £20 per annum, vesting the same in a trust, of which no person could be chosen who resided more than one hundred yards from the Old Cross. We should be inclined to think the deviser entertained a singular predilection for the Old Cross, then in the pride of youth. But if we unfold this whimsical clause, we shall find it contains a shrewd intention. The choice was limited within one hundred yards, because the town itself, in his day, did not in some directions extend farther. Fentham had spent a life in Birmingham, knew well her inhabitants, and like some others, had found honour as well as riches among them. He knew also, he could with safety deposit his property in their hands, and was determined it should never go out. The scheme will answer his purpose.

The uses of this estate, in 1781, about £100 per annum, are for teaching children to read, and for clothing ten poor

widows of Birmingham. Those children belonging to the Blue Coat Charity School, clothed in green, are upon this foundation.

*Crowley's Trust.*

Ann Crowley bequeathed by her last will, in 1733, six houses in Steelhouse Lane, amounting to £18 per annum, for the purpose of supporting a school, consisting of ten children. From an attachment to her own sex, she constituted over this infant colony of letters a female teacher. Perhaps we should have seen a female trust, had they been equally capable of defending the property. The income of the estate increasing, the children are now augmented to twelve.

By a subsequent clause in the deviser's will, twenty shillings a-year for ever, issues out of two houses in the Lower Priory, to be disposed of at the discretion of the trust.

*Scott's Trust.*

Joseph Scott, Esq. assigned, July 7, 1799, certain messuages and lands in and near Walmer Lane, in Birmingham, of the present rent of £40 18s. part of the said premises to be appropriated for the interment of Protestant Dissenters; part of the profits to be applied to the use of a religious society in Carr's Lane, at the discretion of the trust; and the remainder for the institution of a school to teach the mother tongue.

That part of the demise designed for the reception of the dead, is about three acres, upon which stands one messuage, now the Golden Fleece, joining Summer Lane on the west, and Walmer Lane on the east; the other, which has Aston Street on the south, and Walmer Lane on the west, contains about four acres, upon which stood in 1780, ninety-one houses. A building lease, in 1778,

was granted of these last premises for one hundred and twenty years, at £30 per annum; at the expiration of which the rents will probably amount to twenty times the present income.

### *Free School.*

It is entertaining to contemplate the generations of fashion, which not only influences our dress and manner of living, but most of the common actions of life, and even the modes of thinking. Some of these fashions not meeting with the taste of the day, are of short duration, and retreat out of life as soon as they are well brought in; others take a longer space; but whatever fashions predominate, though ever so absurd, they carry a imaginary beauty, which pleases the fancy till they become ridiculous with age, are succeeded by others, when their very memory becomes disgusting.

Our ancestors, the Saxons, after their conversion to Christianity, displayed their zeal in building churches. Though the kingdom was in a few centuries amply supplied, yet that zeal was in no way abated; it therefore exerted itself in the abbey. When a man of fortune had nearly done with time, he began to peep into eternity through the windows of an abbey; or if a villain had committed a piece of butchery, or had cheated the world for sixty years, there was no doubt but he could burrow his way to glory through the foundations of an abbey.

In 1383, the sixth of Richard the II., before the religious fervour subsided that had erected Deritend Chapel, Thomas de Sheldon, John Coleshill, John Goldsmith, and William att Slowe, all of Birmingham, obtained a patent from the crown to erect a building upon the spot where the Free School now stands in New Street, to be called *the Gild of the Holy Cross*; to endow it with lands in Birmingham and Edgbaston, of the annual value of twenty marks, for

the maintenance of two priests, who were to perform divine service to the honour of God, our blessed Lady his mother, the Holy Cross, St. Thomas, and St. Catherine.

The fashion seemed to take with the inhabitants, many of whom wished to join the four happy men, who had obtained the patent for so pious a work; so that in 1393, a second patent was procured by the bailiff and inhabitants of Birmingham, for confirming the gild, and making the addition of a brotherhood in honour of the Holy Cross, consisting of both sexes, with power to constitute a master and wardens, and also to erect a chantry of priests to celebrate divine service in the chapel of the gild, for the souls of the founders, and all the fraternity; for whose support there were given, by divers persons, eighteen messuages, three tofts (pieces of ground) six acres of land, and forty shillings rent, lying in Birmingham and Edgbaston aforesaid.

But in the 27th of Henry the VIII., 1536, when it was the fashion of the day to multiply destruction against the religious and their habitations, the annual income of the gild was valued, by the king's random visitors, at the sum of £31 2*s.* 10*d.* out of which three priests who sung mass, had £5 6*s.* 8*d.* each; an organist, £3 13*s.* 4*d.*; the common midwife, four shillings; the bellman, six shillings and eightpence, for informing the brotherhood when the spit ceased to turn, with salaries of inferior note.

These lands continued in the crown till 1552, the fifth of Edward the VI., when at the humble suit of the inhabitants, they were assigned to the bailiffs of the town, and nineteen other inhabitants of Birmingham, and their successors, to be chosen upon death or removal, by the appellation of the bailiff and governors of the Free Grammar School of King Edward the VI., for the instruction of children in grammar; to be held of the crown in common soccage, paying for ever twenty shillings per annum. Over



this seminary of learning were to preside a master and usher, whose united income seems to have been only twenty pounds per annum. Both were of the clergy. The hall of the gild was used for a school room. In the glass of the windows was painted the figure of Edmund Lord Ferrers, who marrying about three hundred and sixty years ago, the heiress of the house of Birmingham; resided upon the manor, and seems to have been a benefactor to the gild, with his arms, empaling Belknap; and also those of Stafford of Grafton, of Birmingham, and Byron.

The gild stood at that time at a distance from the town, surrounded with inclosures; the highway to Hales Owen, now New Street, running by the north. No house could be nearer than those in the High Street.

The first erection, wood and plaister, which had stood about three hundred and twenty years, was taken down in 1707, to make way for another building, which was removed in 1832, to erect the present Gothic structure. Several houses in New Street and Peck Lane were purchased, and removed to enlarge the site for the present building, which now occupies the whole space, fronting New Street, from the Hen and Chickens to Peck Lane. The lands that support this foundation, which were at the time the charter was granted, Jan. 2, 1552, valued at £21, are, by the increase of the town, the advance of landed property, &c., worth six or seven thousand per annum. The property lies in the most populous and most improving situations, and by the falling in of leases, is calculated to produce in 1850, not less than double its present value, and, before the expiration of the present century, the enormous sum of £50,000 per annum. There is scarcely a principal street, that more or less of this property does not lie in. New Street, High Street, Union Street, Bull Street, Dale End, Moor Street, Edgbaston Street, Spiceall Street, Bull Ring, Digbeth, Park Street, Chapel Street,

Coleshall Street, Broad Street, Summer Lane, Pinfold Street, and other minor, but improving situations.

A part of the twenty self-elected governors, and perpetual corporation, who presided over the increasing funds of this institution, in the latter part of the reign of Charles the II. surrendered the charter into the hands of the king, and James the II. granted a new one, Feb. 20, 1685. The remainder of the governors, however, commenced proceedings in chancery, and recovered the original charter. The Lord Chancellor, in 1723, issued a commission to inspect the conduct of the governors, which they disputed, considering themselves quite irresponsible. The matter was therefore heard in the Hilary Term, 1725. The governors argued their non-responsibility, but the court decided against them. The original seal, about this time, was disused, and the one at present in use adopted. The old one was lost, but has since been restored, and is now in the possession of the governors. John Milward, in 1654, bequeathed an estate in Bordesley, containing about fifty-two acres and twenty-nine perches, commonly called Hen's Farm, situated at the back of Camp Hill, and held at this time by James Taylor, Esq. at the annual rent of £26; and also a public house, known by the name of the Red Lion, supposed to have stood in Deritend; but the present governors are unable to tell where—it is in fact completely lost. The Warwick Canal runs through this property, and the company pays to the tenant the sum of £31 15s. 9d. annually, for about five and half acres occupied by them. The intentions of the donor have never been complied with, which were to send a scholar to Brazen-Nose College, Oxford, alternately, from Birmingham and Haverfordwest, providing £8 13s. 4d. annually to be paid to the principal and fellows of Brazen-Nose College, Oxford, to be laid out upon the maintenance and education of one scholar. £8 13s. 4d. to the school at Haverford and the

like sum to the schoolmaster at Birmingham. It appears that the money paid from time to time for a renewal of the lease, with the rent, have been generously pocketed by the parties, but the duties forgotten. It has been customary to renew the lease by fine, every seven years. In 1816 Mr. Cooke received £158 17s. for a renewal of the lease for seven years, and in 1822, the same sum for a lease of *twenty-one years* duration. By what right the late head master thus gave away, for *twenty-one years*, contrary to the usual custom, that which might not belong to him for *twenty-one hours*, and for the same sum, *too*, received for a seven years lease, remains to be explained. These lands are worth, at a low estimate, £300 per annum. The land-tax, upon the whole of the estates, was purchased in 1802, for about £2000, and in 1810 the annual payment of twenty shillings yearly was redeemed for £25 15s. 6d.

The present head master receives a salary of £400 per annum, with residence and accommodation for eighteen boarders, free of all rates, coals, candles, &c. A piece of land at the Sand Pits, nine acres let in plots, for gardens, at £186, and the governors pay him £15 15s. in compensation for a piece of land, taken to form a new street; independent of the above rents, the master occupies about a quarter of an acre as a garden for himself. The commissioners appointed to inquire into these charities, reported that it would much facilitate the objects of the governors, if the whole of this land was given up; but the late head master, Mr. Cooke, was unwilling to accede to this proposition. This land which would now let for a very large sum, if laid out for streets, and let for building, was granted to the master in 1676, then worth very little. He also receives the whole benefit of Milward's endowment, a piece of land leased at a nominal rent of £8 13s. 4d. to James Taylor, Esq.; fifty-two acres in extent, left for another purpose, by

the donor, with sundry other emoluments, amounting altogether to about £800 per annum.

The second master has a fixed salary of £300 per annum, with house and accommodation for twelve boarders, with considerable emoluments, under the title of capitation fees, &c., which makes his place worth about £500 per annum.

There are two assistants or ushers, one to each master, at fixed salaries of £200 per annum each, who also have the privilege of taking four boarders each. There is a writing master, and a drawing master at £100 per annum each. The lecturer of St. Martin's receives ten guineas per annum. The organist two guineas, and the pew cleaner ten shillings, alleged to be for pews kept for the use of the governors. There are ten exhibitions of £50 each, tenable for four years, open to either university. The candidates for exhibitions are examined by three masters of arts, from the two universities who receive a gratuity of fifteen guineas each, and a good dinner, for which the charity is charged upon the average £25. This was, formerly, considerably more, as a large company was invited, in addition to the governors and dependents of the charity. The governors are allowed £50 annually for the expenses of the visitation, by the present act of parliament, which may include this item of expenditure. The principal masters are required to be members of the established church, and of the university of Oxford or Cambridge, to have taken the degree of Master of Arts, and to be in holy orders, but are not allowed to hold any ecclesiastical office, where personal attendance cannot be dispensed with. The assistants are required to be members of the Established Church, and to have taken the degree of Bachelor of Arts, or Civil Law, at Oxford or Cambridge. The number of boys in the establishment is one hundred and fifteen, independent of a school, established 1738, situated



in Shutt Lane. The teacher of this school has £100 per annum, with house-rent, &c. In 1761—four minor schools in different parts of the town were established, which were afterwards increased to eight, including two for the instruction of girls. All these, except the one in Shutt Lane, were closed about the year 1825. The governors have the right to send sixty children to the National School in Pinfold Street, in lieu of £15 per annum, for ground rent for the land upon which the National School stands. W. Whately, Esq. receives £100 per annum, for his services as secretary, besides the emoluments arising out of law business, connected with the charity, he being solicitor to the governors.

A friendly suit was commenced about 1824, between his majesty's attorney-general, at the relation of the governors against the bishop of the diocese, and the pedagogue and sub-pedagogue. This matter was referred to a master in chancery, who gave his report March 9, 1829, and his general report, 27th April, 1830.

The whole of these proceedings were instituted with a view to obtain an act of parliament, which was introduced into the House of Commons in 1830, and finally passed into a law, with considerable modifications August 23, 1831. The attempt to remove the school out of the town was successfully opposed, and many objectionable clauses either withdrawn or considerably altered. Great excitement was manifested during the agitation of this question, and a considerable number of petitions, were presented to both houses of parliament, from different classes of persons, one of which was signed by seven thousand mechanics and artizans. The inhabitants made out a clear case, and obtained the insertion of a clause, to pay £750 out of the charity funds, towards the expenses of the opposition. The governors are empowered to raise £50,000, either by sale or mortgage of the school estates, to build a new school upon the original site in New Street, to teach, in

addition to the learned languages, the arts and sciences, &c. Four schools are to be established before the year 1840, in different parts of the town, for the education of poor children. £4000 are allowed for the establishment of these schools, and the expences are afterwards to be defrayed out of the funds of the charity. Persons may be elected governors, who are rated to the poor in Birmingham, without being resident in the town. Governors are not allowed to be lessees, tenants at will, or assignees, or to hold under any lessee, assignee, or tenant at will. The accounts are to be published in June every year, in one newspaper. The masters are allowed retiring pensions, not exceeding one half their respective salaries. The expiration of one lease only, at Lady Day this year, 1835, will add to the income of this charity, upwards of £1000 per annum. The property consists of forty-three front houses, forty-three back houses, and ten workshops, and is situated in Aston, Red Lion, and Vauxhall Streets; and the leases that fall in at Lady Day, 1838, will produce at least £3000 more, to the annual receipts.

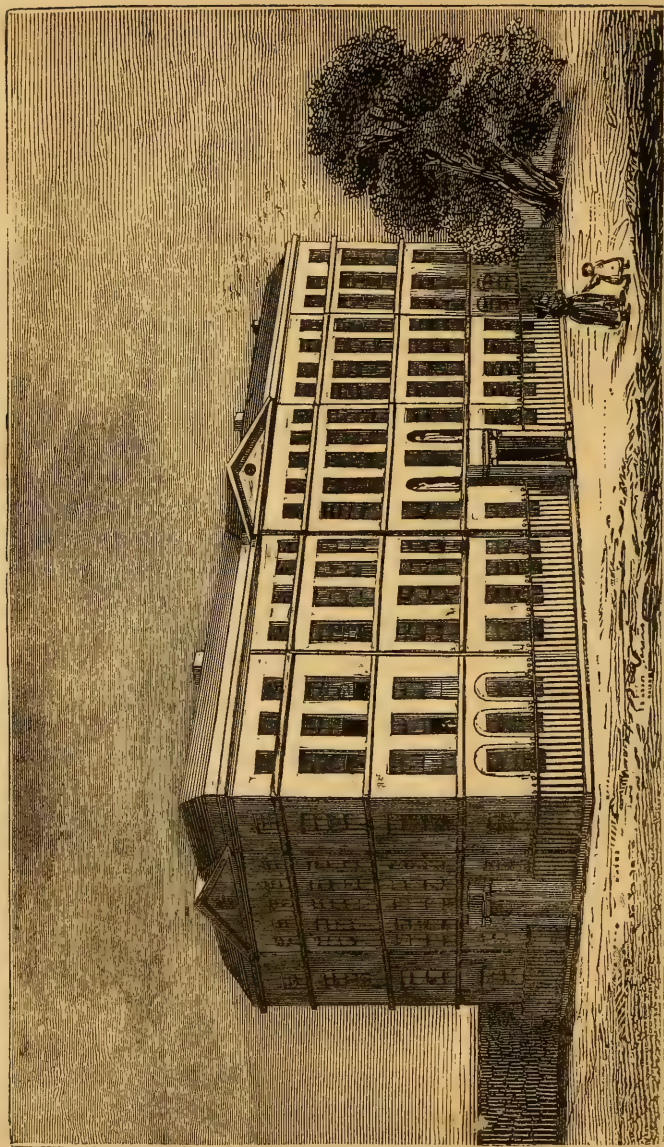
*Governors of Free Grammar School, New Street.*

James Woolley, Esq.	Rev. Anth. James Clarke.
Theodore Price, Esq.	Mr. W. C. Alston.
Isaac Spooner, Esq.	Sir Edward Thomasan.
John K. Booth, M. D.	Mr. John Walker.
Mr. Isaac Anderton.	Mr. R. W. Gem.
Rev. L. Gardner, D. D.	J. F. Ledsam, Esq.
Mr. Richard Wood.	Mr. Thomas Knott.
Mr. George Barker.	*
James Taylor, Esq.	*
Mr. John Cope.	*

*Head Master.*—Rev. Francis Jeune, D. C. L.

*Second Master.*—Rev. Rann Kennedy, M. A.





BLUE COAT CHARITY SCHOOL.



*Assistants.*

Rev Francis Freer Clay, M.A.—George Hall, Esq., B.A.  
*Writing Master, Mr. Downes.*

*Charity School, commonly called the Blue School.*

There seems to be three classes of people, who demand the care of society ; infancy, old age, and casual infirmity. When a man cannot assist himself, it is necessary he should be assisted. The first of these only is before us. The direction of youth seems one of the greatest concerns in moral life, and one that is least understood : to form the generation to come, is of the last importance. If an ingenious master hath flogged the A B C into an innocent child, he thinks himself worthy of praise. A lad is too much terrified to march that path, which is marked out by the rod. If the way to learning abounds with punishment, he will quickly detest it ; if we make his duty a task, we lay a stumbling-block before him that we cannot surmount. We rarely know a tutor succeed in training up youth, who is a friend to harsh treatment.

Whence it is, that we so seldom find affection subsisting between master and scholar ? From the moment they unite, to the end of their lives, disgust, like a cloud, rises in the mind, which reason herself can never dispel. The boy may pass the precincts of childhood, and tread the stage of life upon an equality with every man in it, except his old schoolmaster ; the dread of him seldom wears off ; the name of Bushby sounded with horror for half a century after he had laid down the rod. I have often been delighted when I have seen a school of boys break up ; the joy that diffuses itself over every face and action, shews infant nature in her gayest form—the only care remaining is, to forget on one side of the walls what was taught on the other. One would think, if *coming out* gives so much satisfaction, there must be something very detestable *within*.

If the master thinks he has performed his task when he has taught the boy a few words, he as much mistakes his duty as he does the road to learning. This is only the first stage of his journey. He has the man to form for society with ten thousand sentiments.

It is curious to enter one of these prisons of science, and observe the master without authority, the children without order; the master scolding, the children riotous. We never *harden* the wax to receive the impression. They act in a natural sphere, but he in opposition: he seems the only person in the school who merits correction; he, unfit to teach, is making them unfit to be taught.

A man does not consider whether his talents are adapted for teaching, so much, as whether he can *profit* by teaching. Thus, when a man hath taught for twenty years, he may be only fit to go to school.

To that vast group of instructors, therefore, whether in, or out of petticoats, who teach without having been taught; who mistake the tail for the seat of learning, instead of the head; who can neither direct the passions of others nor their own. It may be said, "Quit the trade, if bread can be procured out of it. It is useless to pursue a work of error; the ingenious architect must take up your rotten foundation before he can lay one that is solid."

But to the discerning few, who can penetrate the secret windings of the heart; who know that nature may be directed, but can never be inverted; that instruction should ever coincide with the temper of the instructed, or we sail against the wind; that it is necessary the pupil should relish both the teacher and the lesson; which, if presented like a bitter draught, may easily be sweetened to his taste. To these valuable few, who, like the prudent florist, possessed of a choice root, cultivate it with care, adding improvement to every generation; it may be said, "Banish tyranny out of the little dominions over

which you are absolute sovereigns ; introduce in its stead two of the highest ornaments of humanity—love and reason.” Through the medium of the first, the master and the lesson may be viewed without horror ; when the teacher and the learner are upon friendly terms, the scholar will rather invite than repel the assistance of the master. By the second, *reason*, the teacher will support his full authority. Every period of life in which a man is capable of attending to instruction, he is capable of attending to reason. This will answer every end of punishment, and something more. Thus, an irksome task will be changed into a friendly intercourse.

This school, by a date in the front, was erected in 1724, and considerably enlarged in 1794, in St. Philip’s church-yard ; is a plain, airy, and useful building, ornamented over the door with the figures of a boy and a girl in the uniform of the school, and executed with a degree of elegance, that a Roman statuary would not have blushed to own.

This artificial family consists of about two hundred scholars of both sexes, over which preside a governor and governess, both single. Behind the apartments is a large area, appropriated for the amusement of the infant race, necessary as their food. Great decorum is preserved in this little society, who are supported by annual contribution, and by collections made after sermons twice a year.

At fourteen, the children are removed into the commercial world, and often acquire an affluence that enables them to support that foundation which formerly supported them.

It is worthy of remark, that those institutions which are immediately upheld by the temporary hand of the giver, flourish in continual spring, and become real benefits to society ; while those which enjoy a perpetual income, are often tinctured with supineness and dwindle into obscurity. The first usually answers the purpose of the living, the last seldom that of the dead.

Many bequests and donations have at various times enriched this charity, but the supineness of the committee has suffered one of their own body to put into his pocket £1279 19s. 8d. of the funds belonging to the charity, about as much money as would educate, clothe, and feed thirty-one poor children, for four years, this being about the average length of time the children remain in the school. This infamous transaction has just been brought to light, and may serve as a warning to every other charitabie institution, to look well to their funds, and to those who have any thing to do with them. The present master, Mr. Josiah Jaques; matron, Mrs. Hawkes.

*Dissenting Charity School.*

Situate in Park Street, established by the Unitarian Protestant Dissenters about 1760. Now devoted to poor female children only, who are educated, clothed, and fed, and qualified for places of service. They are received into the school, about the age of nine to twelve. The number about forty, who are nominated by the subscribers. The children are taught reading, writing, and arithmetic.

The annual subscriptions seem to be willingly paid, thankfully received, and judiciously expended.

*Deaf and Dumb Institution.*

A suitable and convenient building, erected by Lord Calthorp, upon part of his estate, in the parish of Edgbaston in Calthorp Street, containing accommodation for forty children of both sexes, with play-grounds, master's residence, &c. established in Dec. 1812. The present building was erected in 1814, and entered upon Jan. 4, 1815. Deaf and dumb children from all parts of the kingdom are eligible. The parents or guardians of the children are expected to pay at least four shillings per week for board and lodgings, and to find them suitable clothing. The pupils are admitted between the ages of eight and



thirteen. The expenses, over and above what is paid by the parents, are defrayed by private subscription, the proceeds of a bazaar, conducted by the ladies of the neighbourhood, and charity sermons. A matron superintends the domestic department, and a committee of ladies attend to the employment of the girls. The science of instructing deaf and dumb persons was first introduced to the inhabitants of Birmingham, by the late Dr. De Lys, in a lecture delivered by him at the Philosophic Institution, in 1812; he illustrated his subject by the introduction of a little girl, eight years of age, who had been deaf and dumb from her birth. The audience was so impressed with the importance of the subject, that a society was immediately formed, to impart the benefits of this improvement in science to all who might stand in need. Mr. Thomas Braidwood, grandson, of the celebrated master of that name, in Edinburgh, who founded in this country the art of instructing the deaf and dumb, was appointed first master to this establishment. Mr. Louis Du Puget is the present head master, whose general knowledge of the art renders him highly valuable to the institution. A public examination of the children takes place annually in October, at the general meeting of subscribers, who nominate the children, generally about ten, to be admitted to fill up vacancies. Visitors may inspect the asylum between the hours of twelve and one daily.

#### *Lancasterian School.*

Situated in Severn Street, conducted upon the principles of Joseph Lancaster, viz. that of mutual instruction, established Sept. 11, 1809. One master directs the whole school, assisted by monitors, selected from the boys. They are taught reading, writing, and arithmetic. The whole of the pupils practice writing on slates, and about one third write in books. The useless practice of exer-

cising the younger boys in writing upon sand, has been discontinued many years. Each child pays one penny per week. The school-room is large, calculated to hold many more children than have been attached for some years, with a large yard in front.

The average number of children upon the books, for the year 1833, was two hundred and sixty-seven and the average number of boys in attendance was two hundred and four. The present master, Mr. William Elliott. There is a school upon the same principles for females, in Ann Street.

*National or Madras School.*

Established in the year 1813, upon a system introduced by Dr. Bell, which differs but little from the Lancasterian, both having for their object, to give the first rudiments of education at the smallest possible cost. This establishment is entirely in the hands of the clergy, and friends of the established church, and the pupils regularly attend on Sunday, for the purpose of going to church. The Lancasterian school is supported mostly by dissenters, and it is said that the National system was introduced to prevent the rapid progress the dissenters were making, but, be this at it may, we must not find fault with any thing that adds to the sum of human improvement, be the motives that produced it what they may. The school is a lofty and spacious brick-building situated in Pinfold Street, anciently Le Pynfolde, upon land belonging to the free grammar school. The ground floor is used for the boys, and the upper story for the girls. The matron resides upon the premises. Plain needlework is executed by the female children for hire. The children pay one penny per week. The number of boys and girls about five hundred. There is another school upon this system at Ashted.

*The Welsh Charity*

Supports ten children in the blue coat school. Founded

March 1, 1824, to assist in educating and clothing children of Welsh parentage, in Warwickshire or the neighbouring counties.

*Infant School.*

The general thirst for education, of late years, has given rise to several improvements. The formation of the infant mind, so very important an object to be achieved, has not been neglected; and the labours of many persons of considerable talent, have been solely directed to develope and mature a plan upon which to establish infant schools, where two objects might easily be attained, viz. to keep young children, whose parents were required to attend to domestic or other occupations, during the day, cheerfully and usefully employed, and to impart in the earliest period of existence the foundation for a future education. This object was begun in Birmingham in 1825, and has been attended with many beneficial results. The principal school is in Ann Street; some other schools are also established upon this plan, one at Islington, one at St. George's, and one in Cherry Street. The schools are supported by voluntary contributions, besides twopence per week, expected to be paid by the parents of each child. The institution is superintended by a committee of ladies. The average attendance one hundred and fifty at the principal school, or about three hundred and fifty at the whole.

*New Jerusalem Church Free School.*

Established in 1833, for the instruction of children upon the most improved principles, and to give them as good an education as they are capable of receiving, discarding the old plan, where the master is paid according to the particular branch of knowledge taught, measuring the intellects of the pupil, by the length of the parent's purse. Many are the instances that I have been personally acquainted with, where the pupil has remained at school year

after year at the weekly sum of sixpence or eightpence, learning to *read*, to repeat like a parrot so many words of spelling, or, at the most, to write. He sees his more favoured schoolfellow, his junior by some years, proceeding with the other branches of knowledge, he feels the full force of his situation, with all the degradation attendant upon his parents inability to pay one shilling, or one shilling and fourpence per week. Experience proves that much more may be taught to children of tender years than is generally supposed, and it is a well known fact, to all who have had experience, that the less the pupil is advanced, the more trouble attends his instruction ; that is, if he have the attention he require. I have no hesitation in saying, that a child may be taught to write, and to understand the first principles of arithmetic and grammar, before it is master of the first primer. This school is supported by voluntary subscriptions. A small payment is required from each child. The number of pupils about two hundred ; conducted by the minister, the Rev. E. Madely.

*General Education of the Working Classes.*

The people of Birmingham will be found, generally speaking, as well, if not better informed, than any population of the same amount in the three kingdoms. The rich and endowed free school, which has at its disposal funds sufficient to educate at least as many pupils as all the other establishments together, contributes but in a small proportion to the general stock of knowledge. For out of a number of fifteen thousand, eight hundred, and eighty pupils educated gratuitously in Birmingham, only about one hundred and eighty are instructed upon this foundation, and only a small proportion even of these, are of that class intended to be benefited by the royal founder, who endowed this rich and increasing establishment with lands that never justly belonged to him. The property



was placed in the hands of a perpetual corporation, who, instead of appropriating the increasing funds to extend the objects of the founder, have increased the salaries and emoluments of the masters to nearly £2000 per annum, and are now building a new school, under an act of parliament passed August 23, 1831, at an expense, the common interest of which, would procure an excellent education for a succession of one thousand children. The education of the working classes is limited, in consequence of the children being forced to go into the workshops as early as seven years of age, though the average is perhaps about nine. The instruction, now extensively given through the medium of Sunday schools, with the Lancasterian and national schools, is such that no child is without the means of learning, at least to read and write. Though, I am sorry to be obliged to say, a mistaken notion of the sanctity of the Sabbath has caused several denominations of Christians, within the last few years, to discontinue altogether, their instruction in the arts of writing and arithmetic, confining the pupils to reading only, upon the Sunday. Most of the societies alluded to, teach these arts in the week nights, but, from various causes, this cannot be so effectually done in this way. Many places where they do teach these things on a Sunday, have evening classes for mutual or other instruction.

#### *Workhouse.*

During the long reign of the Plantagenets in England, there were not many laws in the code then existing for the regulation of the poor; distress was obliged to wander for a temporary and uncertain relief:—idleness usually mixed with it.

The nobility then kept plain and hospitable houses; where want frequently procured a supply; but as these were thinly scattered, they were inadequate to the purpose.

As the abbey was much more frequent, and as a great part of the riches of the kingdom passed through the hands of the monk, and charity being consonant to the profession of that order, the weight of the poor chiefly lay upon the religious houses ; this was the general mark of the indigent, the idle, and the imposter, who carried meanness in their aspect, and the words *Christ Jesus* in their mouth. Hence arise the epithets of stroller, vagrant, and sturdy beggar, with which modern law is intimately acquainted. It was frequently observed, that there was but a slender barrier between begging and stealing, that necessity seldom marks the limits of honesty, and that a country abounding with beggars, abounds also with plunderers. A remnant of this urgent race, so justly complained of, which disgrace society, and lay the country under contribution, are still suffered, by the supineness of the magistrate.

When the religious houses, and all their property, in 1536, fell a sacrifice to the vindictive wrath of Henry the VIII., the poor lost their dependence, and as want knows no law, robbery became frequent ; justice called loudly for punishment, and the hungry for bread ; which gave rise, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, to that most excellent institution, of erecting every parish into a distinct fraternity, and obliging them to support their own members ; therefore it is difficult to assign a reason, why the blind should go abroad to see fresh countries, or the man *without feet to travel*.

Though the poor were nursed by parochial law, yet workhouses did not become general till 1730. That of Birmingham was erected in 1733, at the expense of £1173 3s. 5d., and which the stranger would rather suppose was the residence of a gentleman, than that of six hundred paupers. The left wing, called the infirmary, was added in 1766 at the charge of £400, and the right, a place for labour, in 1799, at the expense of £700 more.

Let us a second time consider the 155,000 people who occupy this *grand toy shop of Europe*,\* as one great family, where, though the property of individuals is ascertained and secured, yet a close and beneficial compact subsists. We behold the members of this vast family marked with every stile of character. Forlorn infancy, accidental calamity, casual sickness, old age, and even inadvertent distress, all find support from that charitable fund erected by industry. No part of the family is neglected; he that cannot find bread for himself, finds a ready supply; he that can, ought. By cultivating the young suckers of infancy, we prudently establish the ensuing generation, which will, in the commercial walk, abundantly repay the expense. Temporary affliction of every kind also merits pity; even those distresses which arise from folly, ought not to be neglected. The parish hath done well to many a man, who would not do well to himself. If imprudence cannot be banished out of the world, compassion ought not; he that cannot direct himself, must be under the direction of another. If the parish supported none but the prudent, she would have but few to support. The last stage of human life demands, as well as the first, the help of the family. The care of infancy arises from an expectation of a return, that of old age from benefits already received. Though a man may have passed through life without growing rich, he may, by his labour, have contributed to make others so; though he could not pursue the road to affluence himself, he may have been the means of directing others to find it.

The number of persons depending upon this weekly charity in Birmingham, were, April 14th, 1781, about five thousand two hundred and forty.

Whether the mode of distributing the bounty of the

\* Burke

community, is agreeable to the intentions of legislature, or the ideas of humanity, is a doubt. For in some parishes the unfortunate paupers have the additional misery of being sold to a mercenary wretch to starve upon twelve-pence a head. It is matter of surprise that the magistrate should wink at this cruelty; but it is a matter of pleasure, that no accusation comes within the verge of my historical remarks, for the wretched of Birmingham are not made more so by ill treatment, but meet with a kindness acceptable to distress. One would think *that* situation could not be so despicable, which is often *wished for*, and often *sought*, that of becoming one of the poor of Birmingham.

We cannot be conversant with parochial business, without observing a littleness predominant in most parishes, by using every finesse to relieve themselves of paupers, and throwing them upon others. Thus the oppressed, like the child between two fathers, is supported by neither.

There is also an enormity, which, though agreeable to law, can never be justified by the rules of equity—That a man should spend the principal part of his life in a parish, add wealth to it by his labour, form connexions in it, bring up a family which all belong to it, but having never gained a settlement himself, shall in old age be removed by an order, to perish among strangers. In 1768, a small property fell into my hands, situated in a neighbouring village; I found the tenant had entered upon the premises at the age of twenty-two; that he had resided upon them, with poverty and a fair character, during the long space of forty-six years. I told him he was welcome to spend the residue of his life upon the spot gratis. He continued there ten years after, when finding an inability to procure support from labour, and meeting with no assistance from the parish in which he had been resident for an age, he



resigned the place with tears, in 1778, after an occupation of fifty-six years, and was obliged to recoil upon his own parish, about twelve miles distant, to be farmed with the rest of the poor; and where, he afterwards assured me, "they were murdering him by inches."—But no complaint of this ungrateful kind lies against that people whose character I draw.

Perhaps it may be a wise measure, in a place like Birmingham, where the manufactures flourish in continual sunshine, not to be over strict with regard to removals. Though it may be burdensome to support the poor of another parish, yet perhaps it is the least of two evils. To remove old age which has spent a life amongst us, is ungenerous; to remove temporary sickness, is injurious to trade; and to remove infancy is impolitic, being upon the verge of accommodating the town with a life of labour. It may be more prudent to remove a rascal than a pauper. Forty pounds has been spent in removing a family, which would not otherwise have cost forty shillings, and whose future industry might have added many times that sum to the common capital. The highest pitch of charity, is that of directing inability to support itself. Idleness suits no part of a people, neither does it find a place here; every individual ought to contribute to the general benefit, by his head or his hands. If he is arrived at the western verge of life, when the powers of usefulness decline, let him repose upon his fortune; if no such thing exists, let him rest upon his friends, and if this prop fail, let the public nurse him with a tenderness becoming humanity.

We may observe, that the manufactures, the laborious part of mankind, the poor's rates, and the number of paupers, will everlastingly go hand in hand; they will increase and decrease together; we cannot annihilate one, but the others will follow, and odd as the expression may sound, we become rich by payment and poverty. If we

discharge the poor, who shall act the laborious part? Stop the going out of one shilling, and it will prevent the coming in of two.

At the introduction of the poor laws, under Elizabeth, twopence halfpenny in the pound rent was collected every fortnight for future support. Time has since made an alteration in the system, which is now six-pence in the pound, and collected as often as found necessary. The present levy, 1791, amounts to above £14,000 per annum, but is not wholly collected. As the overseers are generally people of property, payment in advance is not scrupulously observed. It was customary at the beginning of this admirable system of jurisprudence, to constitute two overseers in each parish; but the magnitude of Birmingham pleaded for four, which continued till the year 1720, when a fifth was established. In 1729 they were augmented to half a dozen; the wishes of some, who are frightened at office, rise to the word *dozen*, a number very familiar in the Birmingham art of reckoning; twelve overseers, and about one hundred and sixteen guardians, elected triannually, now preside over this establishment.

From the annual disbursements in assisting the poor, which I shall here exhibit from undoubted evidence, the curious will draw some useful lessons respecting the increase of manufactures, of population, and of property.

No memoirs are found prior to 1676.

Year.	Disbursed.			Year.	Disbursed.		
	£.	s.	d.		£.	s.	d.
1676	328	17	7	1682	337	2	8½
1677	347	9	10½	1683	410	12	1
1678	398	8	0½	1684	451	0	5½
1679	omitted			1685	324	2	8
1680	342	11	2½	1686	338	12	11
1681	363	15	7	1687	343	15	6

Year.	Disbursed.			Year.	Disbursed.		
	£.	s.	d.		£.	s.	d.
1688	308	17	9½	1721	1024	6	6½
1689	395	14	11	1722	939	18	0½
1690	396	15	2½	1739	678	8	5
1691	354	1	5½	1740	938	0	6
1692	360	0	4½	1742	888	1	1½
1693	376	12	3½	1743	799	6	1
1694	423	12	1½	1744	851	12	5½
1695	454	2	1½	1745	746	2	7
1696	385	8	11½	1746	1003	14	9½
1697	446	11	5	1747	1071	7	3
1698	505	0	2½	1748	1175	8	7¼
1699	592	11	2	1749	1132	11	7½
1700	661	7	4½	1750	1167	16	6
1701	487	13	0	1751	1352	0	8½
1702	413	14	0½	1752	1355	6	4
1703	476	13	10	1756	3255	18	3¼
1704	555	11	11½	1757	3402	7	2½
1705	510	0	10	1758	3306	12	5
1706	519	3	6	1759	2708	9	5¾
1707	609	0	4½	1760	3221	18	7
1708	649	15	9	1761	2935	4	1½
1709	744	17	0½	1762	3078	18	2½
1710	960	8	8½	1763	3330	13	11½
1711	1055	2	10	1764	3963	11	0½
1712	734	0	11	1765	3884	18	9
1713	674	7	6	1766	4716	2	10½
1714	722	15	6½	1767	4940	2	2
1715	718	2	1	1768	4798	2	5
1716	788	3	2½	1769	5082	0	9
1717	764	0	6½	1770	5125	13	2½
1718	751	2	4	1771	6132	5	10
1719	1094	10	7	1772	6139	6	5½
1720	950	14	0	1773	5584	18	8½

Year.	Disbursed.			Year.	Disbursed.		
	£.	s.	d.		£.	s.	d.
1774	6115	17	11	1807	22632	7	1
1775	6509	10	10	1808	21758	10	10
1776	52034	9 $\frac{1}{2}$		1809	18606	1	1
1777	6012	5	5	1810	21856	8	9
1778	6866	10	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	1811	20957	12	5
1779	8081	19	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	1812	33026	17	5
1780	9910	4	11 $\frac{3}{4}$	1813	41957	10	3 $\frac{1}{4}$
1781	11605	19	9	1814	36943	19	11 $\frac{1}{4}$
1782	10943	10	3	1815	55674	17	7 $\frac{1}{4}$
1783	13744	5	55	1816	41418	17	10 $\frac{1}{2}$
1784	13,103	2	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	1817	52735	19	4
1785	11569	11	5 $\frac{3}{4}$	1818	61928	3	8 $\frac{3}{4}$
1786	11860	17	2 $\frac{3}{4}$	1820	58221	0	0
1787	11132	16	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	1823	36154	0	0
1788	11823	17	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	1825	39976	0	0
1789	14714	8	7	1827	47477	0	0
1790	16035	15	11 $\frac{3}{4}$	1828	47245	0	0
1791	16010	13	5 $\frac{3}{4}$	1829	48175	0	0
1792	12945	0	6 $\frac{3}{4}$	1830	50028	16	11
1793	14067	7	2 $\frac{1}{4}$	1831	52721	13	8 $\frac{1}{4}$
1794	21461	16	2 $\frac{1}{4}$	1832	54774	1	10 $\frac{1}{4}$
1795	20732	9	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	1833	45629	19	7
1796	24050	14	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	1834	44312	4	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
1806	19136	18	2	1835			

These sums are for the above years, ending at Lady Day.

We cannot pass through this splendid edifice without being pleased with its internal economy; order influences the whole, nor can the cleanliness be exceeded; but I am extremely concerned that I cannot pass through without complaint. There are evils in common life which admit of no remedy; but there are very few which may not be lessened by prudence. The modes of nursing infancy in this little dominion of poverty, are truly defective. It is



to be feared the method intended to train up inhabitants for the earth, annually furnishes the regions of the grave. Why is so little attention paid to the generation who are to tread the stage after us? as if we suffered them to be cut off that we might keep possession for ever. The unfortunate orphan that none will own, none will regard : distress, in whatever form it appears, excites compassion, but particularly in the helpless. Whoever puts an infant into the arms of decrepid old age, passes upon it a sentence of death, and happy is that infant who finds a reprieve. The tender sprig is not likely to prosper under the influence of the tree which attracts its nurture ; applies that nurture to itself, where the calls occasioned by decay are the most powerful. An old woman and a sprightly nurse, are characters as opposite as the antipodes. If we could but exercise a proper care during the first two years, the child would afterwards nurse itself; there is not a more active animal in the creation, no part of its time, while awake, is unemployed. Why then do we invert nature, and confine an animal to still life, in what is called a school, who is designed for action? We cannot with indifference behold infants crowded into a room by the hundred, commanded perhaps by some disbanded soldier, termed a schoolmaster, who having changed the sword for the rod, continues much inclined to draw blood with his arms ; where every individual not only re-breathes his own air, but that of another. The whole assembly is composed of the feeble, the afflicted, the maimed, and the orphan ; the result of whose confinement is a sallow aspect, and a sickly frame : but the paltry grains of knowledge gleaned up by the child in this barren field of learning, will never profit him twopence in future ; whereas, if we could introduce a robust habit, he would one day be a treasure to the community, and a greater to himself. Till he is initiated into labour, a good foundation for health may be laid in air and exercise. Whenever I

see half a dozen of these forlorn innocents quartered upon a farm house, a group of them taking the air under the conduct of a senior, or marshalled in rank and file to attend public worship, I consider the overseer who directed it, as possessed of tender feelings. Their orderly attire and simplicity of manners, convey a degree of pleasure to the mind, and I behold in them the future support of that commercial interest, upon which they now lie as a burthen.

If I have dwelt long upon the little part of our species, let it plead my excuse to say, I cannot view a human being, however diminutive in stature, or oppressed in fortune, without considering *I view an equal*.

### *The Asylum*

For the infant poor, established in Summer Lane, in 1797, is conducted by a committee of guardians and overseers. The manufacture of pins, straw-plait, lace, &c., is carried on for the purpose of employing the children, whose labour produces a profit to the parish. There is a bath, garden, play-ground, school, and chapel connected with this institution. There are usually from two hundred to two hundred and fifty children in this parish family.

### *Workhouse Bill.*

I have often mentioned an active spirit as the characteristic of the inhabitants of Birmingham. This spirit never forsakes them. It displays itself in industry, commerce, invention, and internal government. A singular vivacity attends every pursuit till completed, or discarded for a second. The bubble of the day, like that at the end of a tobacco-pipe, dances in air, exhibits divers beauties, pleases the eye, bursts in a moment, and is followed up by another.

There is no place in the British dominions easier to be

governed than Birmingham, and yet we are fond of forging acts of parliament to govern her.

There is seldom a point of time in which an act is not in agitation ; we fabricate them with such expedition, that we could employ a parliament of our own to pass them. But, to the honour of our ladies, not one of these acts is directed against them. Neither is there an instance upon record, that the torch of Hymen was ever extinguished by the breath of Marriot, in Doctors Commons.

In the spring 1783, we had four acts upon the anvil. Every man of the least consequence becomes a legislator, and wishes to lend his assistance in framing an act ; so that instead of one lord, as formerly, we now, like the Philistines, have three thousand.

An act of parliament, abstractly considered, is a dead matter ; it cannot operate of itself ; like a plaister, it must be applied to the evil, or that evil will remain. We vainly expect a law to perform the intended work ; if it does not we procure another to make it. Thus the canal, by one act in 1767, hobbled on like a man with one leg ; but a second in 1770 furnished a pair. The lamp act, procured in 1769, was worn to rags, and mended with another in 1773 ; and this second which had been long out of repair, was patched by a third, in 1801 ; in 1812 the whole three were swept away, and in 1828, the last and present act was manufactured.

We carry the same spirit into our bye-laws, and with the same success. Schemes have been devised, to oblige every man to pay levies : but it was found difficult to extract money from him who had none.

In 1754, we brought the manufacture of packthread into the workhouse, to reduce the levies ;—the levies increased. A spirited overseer afterwards, for the same reason, as if poverty was not a sufficient stigma, badged the poor. The levies still increased.

The advance of bread in 1756, induced the officers to step out of the common track, perhaps out of their knowledge; and, at the expense of half a levy, fit up an apparatus for grinding corn in the house. Thus, by sacrificing half *one levy*, *many would be saved*. However, in the pursuit, many happened to be lost. In 1761, the apparatus was sold at a farther loss, and the overseers sheltered themselves under the charge of idleness against the paupers.

In 1766, the spinning of mop-yarn was introduced, which might, with attention, have turned to account; but unfortunately the yarn proved of less value than the wool.

Others, with equal wisdom, were to ease the levies by feeding a drove of pigs, which, agreeable to their own nature ran backwards. Renting a piece of ground, by way of garden, which supplied the house with a pennyworth of vegetables for twopence, adding a few cows and a pasture; but as the end of all was *loss*, the levies increased.

In 1780, two collectors were appointed, at fifty guineas each, which would save the town *many a hundred*;—still the levies increased.

A petition was this sessions presented, for an act to overturn the whole pauper system (for our heads are as fond of new fashions in parochial government, as in the hats which cover them) to erect a superb workhouse, at the expense of £10,000 with powers to borrow £15,000, which grand design was to reduce the levies *one third*. The levies will increase.

The reasons *openly* alleged were, “ The out-pensioners, which cost £7000 a year, are the chief foundation of our public grievances; that the poor ought to be employed *in* the house, lest their morals become injured by the shops, which prevents them from being taken into family service; and the crowded state of the workhouse.”—But whether



the pride of an overseer, in perpetuating his name, is not the pendulum which set the machine in motion? Or, whether a man, as well as a spider, may not create a place, and, like that—*fill it with himself*?

The bill directs, that the inhabitants shall choose a number of guardians by ballot, who shall erect a workhouse on Birmingham Heath; a spot as airy as the scheme; conduct a manufacture, and the poor; dispose of the present workhouse; seize and confine idle or disorderly persons, and keep them to labour till they have reimbursed the parish all expenses.

But it may be asked, Whether spending £15,000 is likely to reduce the levies?

Whether we shall be laughed at for throwing by a building, the last wing of which cost a thousand pounds, after using it only three years?

Our commerce is carried on by reciprocal obligation. Every overseer has his friends, whom he cannot refuse to serve; nay, whom he may even wish to serve, if that service costs him nothing. Hence that over-grown monster so justly complains of, *the weekly tickets*; it follows, whether *sixty* guardians are not likely to have more friends to serve than six overseers?

Whether the trades of the town, by a considerable manufacture established at the workhouse, will not be deprived of their most useful hands?

Whether it is not a maxim of the wisest men who have filled the office, “to endeavour to keep the poor *out* of the house, for if they are admitted, they become more chargeable; nor will they leave it without clothing?

A workhouse is a kind of prison, and a dreadful one to those of tender feelings. Whether the health of an individual, the ideas of rectitude, or the natural right of our species, would not be infringed by a cruel imprisonment.

If a man has followed an occupation forty years, and

necessity sends him to the parish, whether is it preferable to teach him a new trade, or suffer him to earn what he can at his old? If we decide for the latter, whether he had better walk four hundred yards to business, or four miles? His own infirmity will determine this question.

If a young widow be left with two children, shall she pay a girl sixpence a week to tend them, while she earns five shillings at the shops, and is allowed two by the parish, or shall all three reside in the house, at the weekly expense of six, and she be employed in nursing them? If we again declare for the latter, it follows, that the parish will not only save four shillings a week, but the community may gain half a crown by her labour.

Whether the morals of the children are more likely to be injured by the shops, than the morals of half the children in town; many of whom labour to procure levies for the workhouse?

Whether the morals of a child will be more corrupted in a small shop, consisting of a few persons, or in a large one at the workhouse, consisting of hundreds?

Whether the grand shop at Birmingham Heath, or at any heath, will train girls for service preferable to others?

Shall we, because the house has been crowded a few weeks, throw away £15,000, followed by a train of evils? A few months ago I saw in it a large number of vacant beds. Besides, at a small expense, and without impeding the circulation of air, conveniency may be made for one hundred more.

Did a manufacture ever prosper under a multitude of inspectors, not one of which is to taste the least benefit?

As public business, which admits no profit, such as vestry assemblies, commissions of lamps, turnpike meetings, &c. are thinly attended, even in town; what reason is there to expect a board two miles in the country?

The workhouse may be deemed *The nursery of Birmingham*, in which she deposits her infants for future service: the unfortunate and the idle, till they can be set upon their own basis; and the decrepid, during the few remaining sands in their glass. If we therefore carry the workhouse to a distance, whether we shall not interrupt that necessary intercourse which ought to subsist between a mother and her offspring? As sudden sickness, indications of child-birth, &c. require immediate assistance, a life in extreme danger may chance to be lost by the length of the road.

If we keep the disorderly till they have reimbursed the parish, whether we do not acquire an inheritance for life?

We censure the officer who pursues a phantom at the expense of others; we praise him who *teaches the poor to live*.

All the evils complained of, may be removed by *attention in the man*; the remedy is not in an act. He therefore accuses his own want of application, in soliciting government to *do* what he might do himself. Expenses are saved by private acts of economy, not by public acts of parliament.

It has long been said, *think* and *act*; but as our internal legislators choose to reverse the maxim by setting up an extensive shop; then seeking a trade to bring in, perhaps they may place over the grand entrance, *act* and *think*.

The act passed in 1783, was repealed, September 6th, 1831, and a new act granted. Upon the 25th of March, every third year, one hundred and eight guardians, are to be elected, by the rate-payers assessed at £12 and upwards, and who must have paid up their rates. The meetings for the election of guardians or other purposes, must be advertised in one or more newspapers, and upon the church doors, and they are to be held in the Town Hall. A per-

son rated at £20 is eligible to be elected a guardian. Twelve overseers are to be appointed annually, by two of his majesty's justices, six of them on or within fourteen days after the 25th March, and the other six on or within fourteen days after the 25th September. Landlords may compound for premises under the value of £12 per annum. If £5 or under, one third the rate will be taken. If above £5, and not exceeding £8, one half will be received; above £8, and not exceeding £12, two thirds the rate must be paid. The levies are made after the rate of one shilling and sixpence in the pound, and five rates have been usually granted per annum. Guardians are empowered with the consent of the rate-payers to borrow £12,000 by sale or mortgage of lands, buildings, &c., of the parish, or upon the parish rates, to rebuild the workhouse. They are also empowered to grant building leases of the lands belonging to the parish, and to purchase other lands not exceeding five acres. The accounts must be published in some newspaper, in the month of June, every year.

One remark should never be lost sight of, *the more we tax the inhabitants, the sooner they will leave us, and carry off the trades.*

### *Old Cross.*

So called, because prior to the Welsh Cross; before the erection of this last, it was simply called, the cross.

The use of the market cross is very ancient though not equal to the market, for this began with civilization.

Christianity first appeared in Britain under the Romans; but in the sixth century, under the Saxon government, it had made such an amazing progress, that every man seemed to be not only *almost a Christian*, but it was unfashionable not to have been a zealous one. The cross of Christ was frequently mentioned in conversation, and afterwards became an oath. It was hacknied about the





OLD CROSS.



streets, sometimes in the pocket, or about the neck ; sometimes it was fixed upon the church, which we see at this day, and always hoisted to the top of the steeple. The rudiments of learning began with the cross ; hence it stands to this moment as a frontispiece to the battledore, which likewise bears its name.

This important article of religion was thought to answer two valuable purposes, that of collecting the people, and containing a charm against ghosts, evil spirits, &c., with the idea of which that age was much infested. To accomplish these singular ends, it was blended into the common actions of life, and at that period it entered the market place. A few circular steps, from the centre of which issued an elevated pillar, terminating in a cross, was the general fashion throughout the kingdom ; and perhaps our Vulcanian ancestors knew no other for twelve hundred years, this being renewed about once every century, till the year 1702, when the old cross was erected, at the expense of £80 9s. 1*d.* This was the first upon that spot ever honoured with a roof : the under part was found a useful shelter for the market people. The room over it was designed for the court leet, and other public business, which, during the residence of the lords upon the manor, had been transacted in one of their detached apartments, yet in being ; but after the removal of the lords, in 1537, the business was done in the Leather Hall, which occupied the whole east end of New Street, a covered gateway of twelve feet excepted, and afterwards in the Old Cross.

This building was taken down in 1784, and now the inhabitants have the pleasure of sleeping over public business in a private bed-chamber. The materials were sold for £60, and the clock for £10, after being used eighty-two years :—about £10 9s. 1*d.* less than their original cost.

*Welsh Cross.*

If a reader, fond of antiquity, should object that I have comprised the *ancient state of Birmingham* in too small a compass, and that I ought to have extended it beyond the fifty-second page—I answer, when a man has not much to say, he ought to be hissed out of authorship, if he picks the pocket of his friend by saying much; neither does antiquity end with that page, for in some of the chapters I have led him through the mazes of time, to present him with a modern prospect.

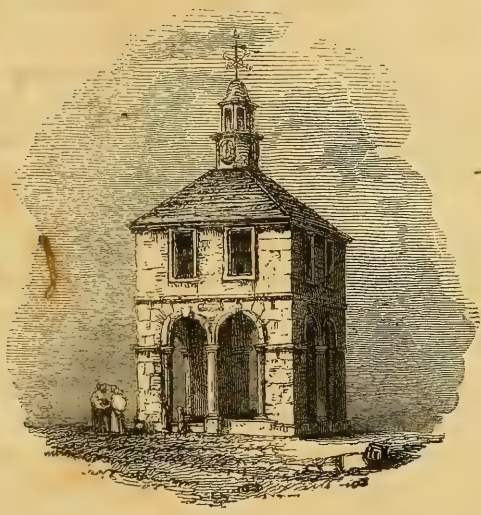
In erecting a new building, we generally use the few materials of the old as far as they will extend. Birmingham may be considered as one vast and modern edifice, of which the ancient materials make but a very small part: the extensive *new* seems to surround the minute *old*, as if to protect it.

Upon this spot, now the juncture of Bull Street, Dale End, and High Street, probably stood a finger-post, to direct the stranger that could read, for there were not many, the roads to Wolverhampton and Lichfield.

Though the ancient post and the modern cross, might succeed each other, yet this difference was between them, one stood at a distance from the town, the other near its centre.

By some antique writings it appears, that two hundred years ago this spot bore the name of the Welsh End, perhaps from the number of Welsh in its neighbourhood, or rather from its being the great road to that principality, and was at that time the extremity of the town, odd houses excepted. This is corroborated by a circumstance I have twice mentioned already, that when Birmingham unfortunately fell under the frowns of Prince Rupert, at the battle of Birmingham, 1643, and he determined to reduce it to ashes for succouring an enemy, it is reason-





J. S. 1844

WELCH CROSS.



able to suppose he began at the exterior, which was then in Bull Street, about twelve houses above the cross.

If we were ignorant of the date of this cross, the style of the building itself would inform us, that it rose in the beginning of the last century, and was designed, as population increased, for a Saturday market ; yet, although it was used in some degree for that purpose, the people never heartily adopted the measure.

In a town like Birmingham, a commodious market-place, with which we have just been supplied, will be extremely useful. Efforts were used to make one, of a large area, once a bowling-green, in Corbet's Alley, now Union Street ; also some other places have been mentioned ; but I am persuaded the market people would suffer the grass to grow in it as peaceably as in their own fields. We are not easily drawn from ancient custom, except by interest.

For want of a convenient place where the sellers might be collected into one point, they were scattered into various parts of the town. Corn was sold by sample in the Bull Ring ; the eatable productions of the garden, in the same place. Butchers' stalls occupied Spiceal Street ; one would think a narrow street was preferred, that no customer should be suffered to pass by. Flowers, shrubs, &c., at the ends of Philip Street and Moor Street ; beds of earthenware lay in the middle of the foot ways ; and a double range of insignificant stalls, in the front of the shambles, choak up the passage. The beast market was kept in Dale End ; that for pigs, sheep, and horses, in New Street ; cheese issued from one of our principal inns, and afterwards from an open yard in Dale End ; fruit, fowls, and butter, were sold at the Old Cross ; nay, it is difficult to mention a place where they were not. We may observe, if a man has an article to sell which another wants to buy, they will quickly find each other out.

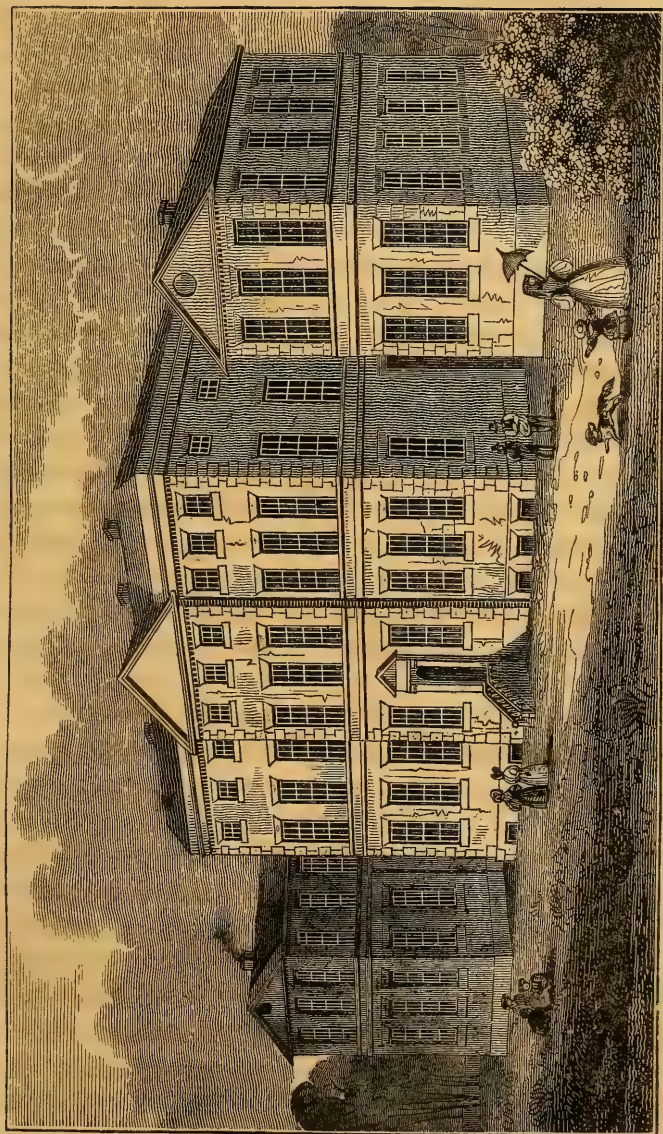
Though the market inconveniences were great, a man seldom brought a commodity for the support of life, or of luxury, and returned without a customer. Yet even this crowded state of the market, dangerous to the feeble, had its advantages. Much business was transacted in a little time; the first customer was obliged to use dispatch; before he was justled out by a second. *To stand all the day idle in the market place, is not known among us.*

The upper room of this cross, was appropriated for a military guard house. We find, December 16, 1723, an order made at a public meeting, "That a guard house should be erected in a convenient part of the town, because neither of the crosses were eligible." But this old order, like some of the new, was never carried into execution. As no complaint lies against the cross in our time, we may suppose it suitable for the purpose; and I know none but its prisoners that pronounced against it. The pillory, stocks, and whipping post, were fixed against it. It was removed in 1803, to widen the street.

### *General Hospital.*

Though charity is one of the most amiable qualities of humanity, yet, like Cupid, she ought to be represented blind; or, like justice, hoodwinked. None of the virtues have been so much misapplied; giving to the *hungry*, is sometimes only another word for giving to the *idle*. We know of but two ways in which this excellence can exert itself; improving the *mind*, and nourishing the *body*. To help him who *will not* help himself; or, indiscriminately to relieve those that want, is totally to mistake the end; for *want* is often met with; but to supply those who *cannot* supply themselves, becomes real charity. Some worthy Christians have taken it into their heads to relieve *all*, for





THE GENERAL HOSPITAL.



fear of omitting the right. What should we think of the constable who seizes every person he meets with, for fear of missing the thief? Between the simple words, therefore, of WILL NOT and CANNOT, runs the fine barrier between real and mistaken charity.

This virtue, so strongly inculcated by the christian system, has, during the last seventeen centuries, appeared in a variety of forms, and some of them have been detrimental to the interest they were meant to serve; *Such was the cloister*. Man is not born altogether to serve himself, but the community; if he cannot exist without the assistance of others, it follows, that others ought to be assisted by him; but if condemned to obscurity in the cell, he is then fed by the aid of the public, while that public derives none from him.

Estates have sometimes been devised in trust for particular uses, meant as charities by the giver, but have, in a few years, been diverted out of their original channel to other purposes. The trust themselves, like so many contending princes, ardently struggle for sovereignty; hence, *legacy* and *discord* are intimate companions.

The plantation of many of our English schools sprang up from the will of the dead; but it is observable, that sterility quickly takes place; the establishment of the master being properly secured, supineness enters, and the young scions of learning are retarded in their growth. It therefore admits a doubt, whether charitable donation is beneficial to the world; nay, the estate itself becomes blasted when bequeathed to public use, for being the freehold of none, none will improve it; besides the more dead land, the less scope for industry.

At the reformation, under Queen Elizabeth, charity seemed to take a different appearance; employment was found for the idle; he that was able, was obliged to labour, and the parish was obliged to assist him who could not.

Hence the kingdom was replete with workhouses? these are the laudable repositories of distress.

It has already been observed, that three classes of people merit the care of society; forlorn infancy, which is too weak for its own support; old age, which has served the community, without serving itself; and accidental calamity: the two first fall under the eye of the parish, the last under the modern institution of the General Hospital.

The shell of this plain, but noble edifice, was erected in 1766, upon a situation very unsuitable for its elegant front, in a narrow dirty lane, with an aspect directing up the hill, which should ever be avoided. The wings were added in 1790.

The amiable desire of doing good in the inhabitants, seemed to have exceeded their ability; and, to the grief of many, it lay dormant for twelve years. In 1778, the matter was revived with vigour; subscriptions filled apace, and by the next year the hospital was finished, at the expense of £7137 10s. Though the benefactions might not amount to this enormous sum, yet they were noble, and truly characteristic of a generous people. The annual subscriptions, as they stood at Michaelmas, 1779, were £901 19s. and, at Midsummer, 1780, £932 8s.

Benevolent donations increasing brought on an increase of patients, which demanded an increase of room. Two ample wings were therefore added in 1791, at the charge of £3016 10s. 10d. The subscriptions had by this time increased to £1293 per annum.

The funds of this institution have been regularly aided by musical performances, usually held triennially, at St. Philip's Church, till 1834, when the meeting took place in the Town Hall, where they will in future be held. This mode of assisting a charitable institution, of the greatest importance, was commenced in the year 1778, and continued







THE DISPENSARY.

for three days, for the joint benefit of St. Paul's Chapel, and the General Hospital. The small amount of £127 was the nett benefit to this institution. The festivals have been continued with increasing success to the present time, and have considerably aided the funds of this invaluable institution. The following are the sums received from the commencement.

Date.	Month.	Gross Receipts.			Nett Produce.		
		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1778	September	0	0	0	127	0	0
1781	„	0	0	0	140	0	0
1714	„	1325	0	0	703	0	0
1787	August	1980	0	0	964	0	0
1790	„	1965	18	0	958	14	8
1796	September	2044	0	0	897	0	0
1799	„	2544	0	0	1470	0	0
1802	„	3820	17	0	2380	17	4
1805	October	4222	6	4	2202	17	11
1808	„	5511	12	2	3257	19	8
1811	„	6680	2	9	3629	10	0
1814	„	7124	12	0	3131	15	2
1817	„	8746	6	9	4298	10	10
1820	„	9483	4	7	5001	10	11
1823	„	11115	9	9	5806	12	6
1826	„	10104	2	11	4592	3	11
1829	„	9771	4	8	3806	17	3
1834	„	13278	6	2	0	0	0

The rules by which this excellent charity is conducted, are worthy of its authors; success hath fully answered expectation, and the building will probably stand for ages, to tell posterity a favourable tale of the present generation.

*Dispensary,*

Established in 1794, for the relief of the afflicted poor.

This edifice, which has a stone front, is situated in Union Street; erected in 1808. There is an emblematical design, sculptured in relief, over the principal front, executed by W. Hollins. The cost of the building was about £3000. Sick and midwifery patients, of the poorer classes, are visited at their own dwellings, upon the recommendation of a subscriber. A committee of governors conduct the business of the institution. Six surgeons, and three physicians, give their services gratuitously. Between four and five thousand patients are administered to annually. Those patients who are not confined by their disorders, are required to attend at stated periods. There are two resident surgeons, a dispensing apothecary, and a midwife. Vaccine inoculation is performed gratis, without recommendation, on Mondays and Thursdays.

*Self-Supporting Dispensary.*

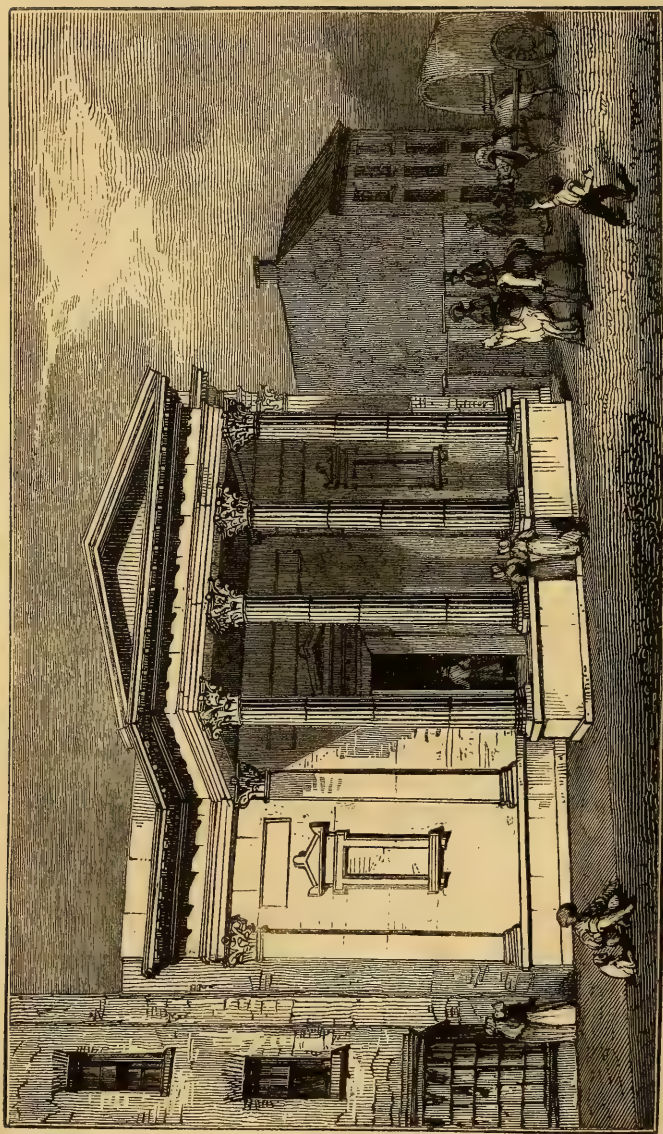
The expenses, as its name imports, is defrayed by those who receive relief, a small sum being charged for each ticket. The object of the institution is to encourage the provident portion of the labouring classes, who may not be able to pay a surgeon, to obtain medical aid without resorting to gratuitous institutions, and thereby support a spirit of independence. Patients are allowed to choose any of the surgeons to the institution, who supply the necessary medicines. The tickets are sold by Mr. Allen, Bennetts Hill, and many other respectable shopkeepers, in various parts of the town.

*Fever Hospital,*

Situate at the corner of Bishopsgate Street, Bath Row, commenced in 1828, for the reception and recovery of persons afflicted with fever, contagious or otherwise. The house stands in a large garden, and possesses many local advantages. The object in view is good, but whether it







SOCIETY OF ARTS.

will answer the end for which it is intended, experience alone must prove.

*Institution for the Relief of Bodily Deformity,*

Commenced in 1817, supported by donations and annual subscriptions. Persons suffering under any distortion of the limbs, or by herniary complaints, will receive medical and surgical attention at No. 54, New Street, upon the recommendation of a subscriber. Surgeon to the institution, Mr. Freer. Day of attendance, Wednesday.

*Infirmary for Diseases of the Eye,*

Established at No. 35, Cannon Street, in 1824, supported by voluntary subscription. Attendance is given on Tuesdays and Saturdays, at one o'clock. Surgeons, Messrs. Hodson, Middlemore, and Ledsam.

*School of Medicine and Surgery,*

Was established in 1828, by the indefatigable exertions of Mr. W. S. Cox, surgeon. The resident physicians and surgeons lecture weekly, upon subjects connected with the design of the institution. Certificates of having attended these lectures qualify students to pass their examination at the London Royal College of Surgeons. This society have lately purchased extensive premises in Paradise Street, formerly a place of worship, and have appropriately fitted them up for the use of the establishment. They have an excellent museum and library. The specimens and books were chiefly presented by friends to the institution.

*Society of Arts,*

Was instituted in 1821 for promoting the general study of the fine arts, by procuring from the nobility and gentry who are its patrons, the loan of original pictures of the ancient

and modern schools, in order to stimulate the genius and industry of its members, and to enrich their annual exhibition. The building is a chaste and elegant specimen of the Corinthian order, with a boldly projecting portico of four elegant columns, and is situated in the upper part of New Street.

*Philosophical Society*

Extended their plan, in 1810, and erected a commodious theatre for the delivery of lectures, by their own members, in Cannon Street, and occasionally by eminent professors in the various branches of science. They have a museum, containing a fine collection of minerals and fossils, an extensive philosophical apparatus, a library, and a reading room. The theatre is also occupied weekly for the lectures of the Mechanics' Institution.

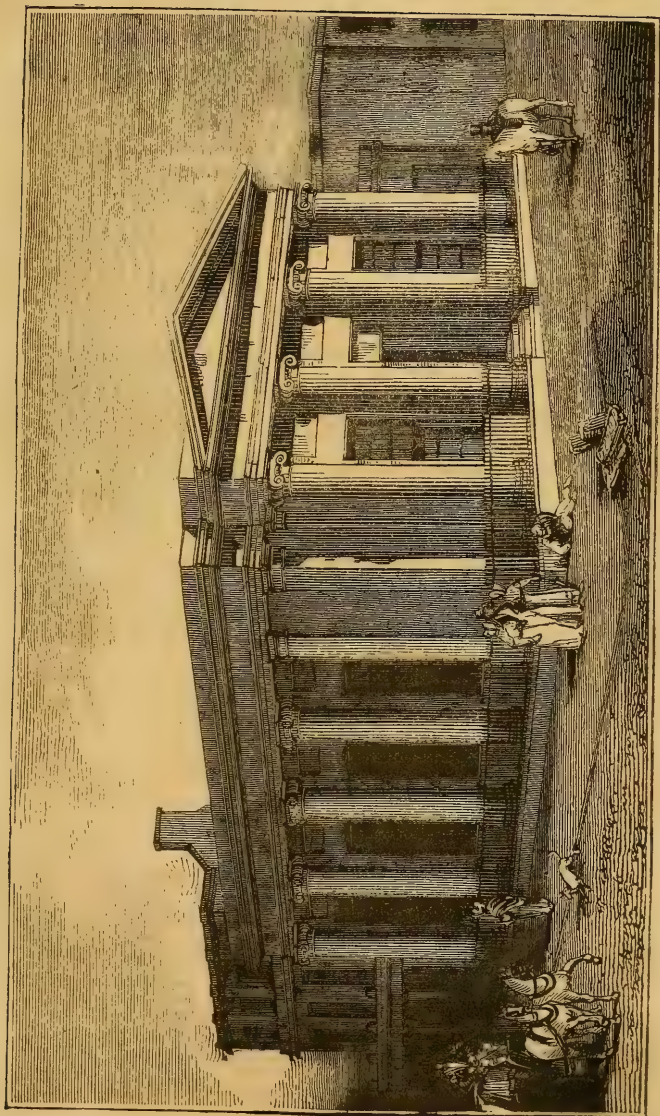
*News Room,*

Was built in 1825. It is a handsome edifice, with a cemented front, ornamented with lofty pillars, of the Ionic order. The interior consists of one large room, opening through folding doors, into smaller apartments, over which, are a billiard room and a refectory, and a suite of rooms has lately been added, in which copies of the public records, and books of reference are deposited.

*Magdalen Asylum, Islington,*

Was established in 1828, for the purpose of restoring to society females who have wandered from the paths of virtue. This laudable institution is supported by private subscriptions. Much good has resulted from this Society, but it is to be lamented that a proportion of the inmates, amounting to nearly one half, return with renewed vigour to their old habits.





NEWS ROOM.



*Musical Performances, for the Relief of Aged and Distressed Housekeepers,*

Take place annually, at Christmas, in the Town Hall, formerly held in St. Paul's Chapel. The whole of the performers act gratuitously, and the profit, after paying unavoidable expenses, is distributed in sums of five shillings each, to persons who may stand in need, and who are recommended by the performers.

*Savings' Bank,*

Established 1827, to receive the savings of the industrious labouring classes. The deposits amount to a very considerable sum, and the object will, no doubt, fully answer the expectations of the projectors, if care be taken to secure the property. It is hoped that the ruinous consequences that have accrued, in many instances, from placing too much power, and too much confidence in one individual, be his station or character what it may, has been fully guarded against, in this establishment. The office is in Temple Row, and is open to depositors, on Mondays and Thursdays.

*Post Office, Bennet's Hill,*

Was considerably improved about the time this street was formed. The public are now accommodated with a piazza, unexposed to the weather, to transact their business. Great improvements have been made in this department, within the last few years; and seven receiving houses have been opened in various parts of the town. The London, Manchester, Liverpool, and Bristol mails, are now dispatched at eight o'clock, P. M., letters are received till seven, for these mails, and after, till fifteen minutes before the actual dispatch of each mail, upon the payment of one penny each letter extra.

*Excise Office,*

Is in New Street, at the corner of Temple Street.

*Stamp Office.*

Is situated in Colmore Row, between Livery Street, and Church Street.

*Assay Office.*

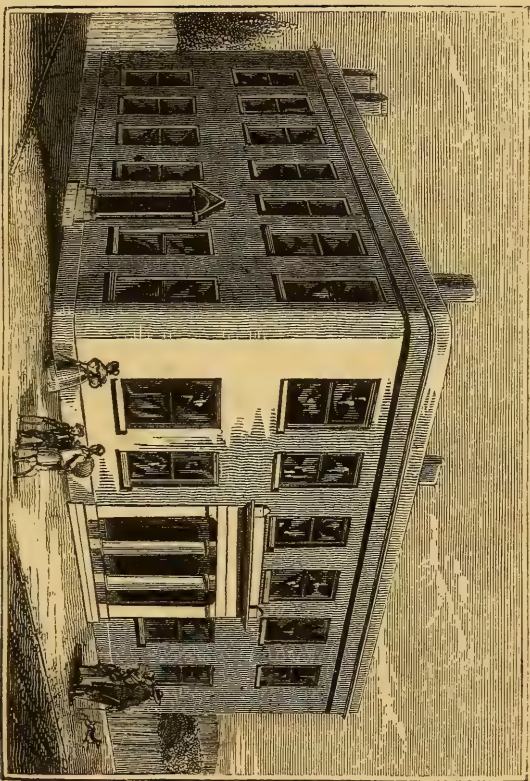
Authorised by an act of parliament, passed in 1824, to mark all articles made of gold and silver, either in Birmingham, or within thirty miles, to prevent frauds in the working of those metals. The office is in Little Cannon Street, and is conducted by persons appointed under the act, called guardians of wrought plate. The sum of seventeen shillings per ounce is paid for gold, and one shilling and sixpence for silver; all articles above five penny weights, in silver, and all articles in sterling gold are required to be marked.

*Gun Barrel Proof House.*

Conducted by the guardian, trustees, and wardens, incorporated by act of parliament, who consist of the lords-lieutenants of the counties of Warwick, Worcester, and Stafford, and the members of parliament for those counties, for the time being, with fifteen persons resident in Birmingham.

The hall, with commodious premises, is situated in Banbury Street, where all barrels for fire arms are duly proved and marked, as the act directs. To forge the mark, or make fire arms without being duly proved, subjects the parties to the penalty of £20. The charge for proving does not exceed one shilling each barrel. A flag is hoisted from the building upon the days of proving.





THE POST OFFICE.



Great quantities of gun and pistol barrels are sent to London to be proved, and are afterwards sold as London made.

### *Cavalry Barracks*

The fashionable productions of the day.—Perhaps this military nursery was intended to preserve the chastity of the soldier, long in jeopardy; or, to separate him from the inhabitant, which tends to make two interests, when, in reality, there is but one; or perhaps, from a principle of economy, the cry of every man in power who runs into debt.

Government took a lease of five acres of land adjoining the north side of the town (late the property of the *Holt* family, now that of *Legge*) at a penny a yard; and in 1793 erected the barracks, at the charge of £13,000. They will accomodate one hundred and sixty-two men.

As the man who loves his country will rejoice at every saving system to lighten the load of three hundred millions, I shall state the account with precision.

Annual rent	-	£100	0
Interest upon £13,000	-	650	0
Loss of principal per annum on the average			
during the lease of eighty years	-	162	10

Perhaps there will not, at a medium, be more than two thirds of one hundred and sixty-two men, or one hundred and eight accommodated.

We may reasonably suppose £6000 will be expended, at least, during the term, in wear and tear of furniture, alterations, and repairs of buildings. This principal also of £6000, and half the interest, which is £150 per annum, must be sunk. When all these numbers are added together, it will appear that every man's lodging stands the country in about eleven pence a night, or six shillings and five pence a week. Half this sum united to the slender

pay of the private soldier, would recruit the army with *men* instead of old age and children, and that without pressing or purchase; the landlord would then welcome the soldier with a smile, whom he now receives with a frown.

*Nelson's Statue.*

In the centre of the Old Market Place, facing the church, and near the New Market Hall, stands the statue erected by the inhabitants in honour of the great naval hero of England, the late Admiral Lord Nelson. It is exceedingly well executed in bronze, by that eminent statuary, Westmacott; and with the pedestal, palisades, and lamps, cost about £3000, which was raised by voluntary subscriptions.

The work was opened to the public on the 25th of October, 1809, the day on which was celebrated the jubilee of his late Majesty King George the III. The following is an authorised description of it.—

“In this work, intended to perpetuate the greatest example of naval genius, simplicity has been the chief object in the arrangement. The hero is represented in a reposed and dignified attitude, his left arm reclined upon an anchor: he appears in the costume of his country, invested with the insignia of these honours by which his sovereign and distant princes distinguished him. To the right of the statue is introduced the grand symbol of the naval profession; victory, the constant leader of her favourite hero, embellishes the prow. To the left is disposed a sail, which, passing behind the statue, gives breadth to that view of the composition. Above the ship, is the fac-simile of the flag staff truck of the *L'Orient*, fished up by Sir Samuel Hood, the day following the battle of the Nile, presented by him to Lord Nelson, and now deposited at Milford, as a trophy of that ever-memorable action. This group is surmounted upon a pedestal of statuary marble.



A circular form has been selected, as best adapted to the situation.

“To personify that affectionate regard which caused the present patriotic tribute to be raised, the town of Birmingham, murally crowned, in a dejected attitude, is represented mourning her loss; she is accompanied by groups of genii, or children, in allusion to the rising race, who offer her consolation by bringing her the trident and rudder. In front of the pedestal is the following inscription:—

This statue, in honour of ADMIRAL LORD NELSON, was erected by the inhabitants of Birmingham, A.D. MDCCCIX.

“The whole is inclosed by iron pallisades, in the form of boarding pikes, connected by a twisted cable. At each of the four corners is placed a cannon, from which issues a lamp post representing a cluster of pikes, supporting a ship lantern.”

Mr. Joseph Farror of this town, at his decease, bequeathed twenty-six shillings annually, to be paid out of rents arising from a house in Bradford Street, for keeping the basement of this statue clean, to be paid to the Beadle of St. Martin's. *Query*—Has the salary been received? The public know the duty has not been performed?

### *Deritend Bridge.*

Cooper's Mill, situated upon the verge of the parishes of Aston and Birmingham, four hundred yards below this bridge, was probably first erected in the peaceable ages of Saxon influence, and continued a part of the manorial estate till the disposal of it in 1730.

Before the water was pounded up to supply the mill, it must have been so shallow, as to admit a passage between Digbeth and Deritend, over a few stepping stones; and a gate seems to have been placed upon the verge of the river, to prevent encroachments of the cattle. This

accounts for the original name, which Dugdale tells us was *Derry-yate-end*: derry, low; yate, gate; end, extremity of the parish; with which it perfectly agrees.

The mill afterwards causing the water to be dammed up, gave rise to a succession of paltry bridges, chiefly of timber, to preserve a communication between the two streets. But in latter ages, the passage was dignified with those of stone. In 1750, a wretched one was taken down, and another erected by Henry Bradford and John Collins, overseers of the highway, consisting of five arches; but the homely style, the steep ascent, and the circumscribed width, prevented encomium.

In 1788, an act was obtained to rebuild the bridge, to alter the course of the river, to widen its bed, and improve its banks. The bridge was rebuilt in 1789, but the act expired before the whole was accomplished that was intended; and left the trustees some thousands of pounds in debt. The trustees applied to parliament for an extension of the term, which the inhabitants opposed and frustrated. The works therefore remained incomplete, till a new act was obtained, in 1813, which empowered the trustees to repay the money originally borrowed, and complete the improvements. The bridge was soon after increased in length, at both ends. The road was made considerably wider, and the bridge ornamented with cast-iron balustrades. Toll gates were fixed upon Deritend, Cheapside, Bradford, and Lawley Street bridges, to defray the expenses. Another act was obtained in 1822, which superseded the former one, to widen the lower part of Digbeth, and to repair and enlarge Bradford and Cheapside bridges. This act gave the trustees power to continue the tolls till 1830, but they were discontinued August 27, 1828, the whole of the objects having been accomplished.

*Mechanics Institution,*

Established in 1825, to give instruction at a cheap rate to the labouring classes, in Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, Drawing, &c. And by the establishment of a library of reference, circulating library, reading room, museum of machines, models, specimens of the mineral and animal kingdoms; aided by weekly lectures to give such general knowledge of the application of the arts and sciences, as would be useful to the prosecution and improvement of the various manufactures of the kingdom. These establishments are, in fact, an extension only of the benevolent and praiseworthy plans pursued by the projectors and supporters of Sunday Schools. Their claim to originality is without foundation, as the objects contemplated have been pursued with considerable success, for a series of years, by the Unitarians of Birmingham. The 'Artizan's Library' now held by a miscellaneous proprietary, was originally established to promote the same objects sought by Mechanics' Institutions, by gentlemen connected with the above society of Christians.

The Latin and French languages, with reading, writing, arithmetic, and the higher branches of the mathematics, are taught by competent masters. Weekly lectures are delivered either by professional persons, or gentlemen connected with the Institution. The rate of subscription for an adult, is three shillings per quarter, paid in advance, and one shilling and sixpence for the junior members. It is contemplated to erect a suitable building for this Society, as soon as funds can be raised for that purpose.

*The Birmingham Fire Office,*

Established March 25, 1805. The Company consists of three hundred shares of £1000 each, although only £220 have been paid upon each share, every share is liable

for £1000. The office which was erected in 1808, is in Union Street. This building, which is fronted with stone, cost with engine house, firemen's houses, and stables, nearly £4,000. There are now a variety of branches of other Life and Fire Insurance Offices in Birmingham, almost too numerous to mention. The rates of insurance from fire, are according to the nature of the property, from two shillings and sixpence to four shillings and sixpence per £100 per annum, payable half-yearly. Fires are by no means so prevalent in Birmingham, as they are in some other places, and when they do unfortunately occur, they are mostly confined to manufactories, and seldom destroy dwelling houses. I recollect but one dwelling-house being totally destroyed, accidentally by fire, within the last fifteen years.

This may easily be accounted for, the mode of living here being very different from that of most large towns, almost every house is in the occupation of one family, or if more than one dwell in a house, the upper stories are but seldom used for the purpose of cooking, &c., as they are in London, Manchester, and some other large towns.

### *Gas Works.*

There are two companies to supply the town with gas. The first company incorporated 1819, by act of parliament. The works are situated in Gas Street, Broad Street, and near the Worcester Canal. The other, incorporated in 1825, called the Birmingham and Staffordshire Gas Light Company. This company is empowered to light all places in the counties of Warwick and Stafford. The works are at West Bromwich, and the offices are in the Old Square, Birmingham. The charge for gas at this time, is ten shillings per thousand cubic feet, computed by a metre, fixed by the company upon the premises. The charge was for many years twelve shillings per thousand







THE SOHO.

feet, but in consequence of a new company being announced the others have thought it prudent to lower the price. Nearly all our public shops, inns, public houses, and a great number of manufactories are lighted with gas. The town and the roads for some miles out in several directions are well lighted by the same means. The whole line of road from Birmingham to West Bromwich, a distance of six miles is lighted with gas.

*Beardsworth's Repository and Carriage Mart.*

The largest and most complete establishment of the kind in the kingdom. The building is situated in the upper part of Cheapside, extending to Mosely Street. Previous to the erection of the Town Hall, there was no place in Birmingham where any considerable number of persons could meet under cover, except this Repository, and the owner always lent them willingly for the purpose of public meetings. The building has held nearly four thousand persons to dinner, which will give some idea of the extent of the place, for which see pages 111 and 156.

*Soho Manufactory, &c.*

“ At the northern extremity of the parish of Birmingham, but in the adjoining parish of Handsworth, and county of Stafford, is a hill called *Soho*, at the foot of which stands the far-famed Manufactory of that name, adjacent to the mansion and grounds, which occupy the summit and declivities.

“ In the year 1757, John Wyrley, of Hamstead, Esq. Lord of the Manor of Handsworth, granted a lease for ninety-nine years of certain tracts of common land here, and certain inclosed lands, with liberty to make a cut for turning Hockley Brook and forming a pool, in order to the erection of a water mill. A small house and feeble mill for rolling metal, were consequently erected. In 1762, the

late Matthew Boulton, who then carried on a steel toy manufactory in Birmingham (the place of his nativity), purchased this lease, with all the premises and appurtenances, for the purposes of his trade, and soon afterwards, having enlarged and increased the buildings, and rebuilt the mill, transplanted the whole of his manufactory from Birmingham to Soho; but still further accommodation being requisite for the advancement of his great designs, Mr. Boulton therefore, in 1764, laid the foundation of the present noble manufactory, which was finished in the following year, at the expense of £9000. From that period he turned his attention to a greater variety of branches of manufacture; and in conjunction with Mr. Fothergill, then his partner, established a mercantile correspondence throughout Europe. Impelled by an ardent attachment to the arts, and by the patriotic ambition of bringing his favourite Soho to the highest degree of perfection, the ingenious proprietor soon established a seminary of artists, for drawing and modelling; and men of genius were sought for and liberally patronised, whose exertions produced a successful imitation of the *or-molu*, in a variety of metallic ornaments, consisting of vases, tripods, candelabras, &c. manufactured with superior skill and taste. From this elegant branch of the business the artists were led, by a natural and easy transition, to that of wrought silver; and other useful and ornamental arts gradually followed.

Mr. Boulton finding from experience that the water power at Soho was insufficient for his purposes, though aided by the power of horses, in 1767 put up a steam engine, on Savery's plan, with the intention of returning and raising his water about twenty-four feet high; but this proving unsatisfactory to him, he soon after formed an acquaintance with his subsequent partner and friend, *James Watt*, of Glasgow, who in 1765, had invented several valuable improvements upon the steam engine,



which, in fact, made it a new machine. For these improvements Mr. Watt had obtained a patent in January, 1769, and afterwards came to settle at Soho, where in that year he erected one of his improved engines, and after full proof of its utility, obtained in 1775, a prolongation of the term of his patent for twenty-five years from that date. He then entered into partnership with Mr. Boulton, and they established at Soho a very extensive manufactory of these engines, which are now adapted to almost every mechanical purpose where great power is requisite.

“ The application of this improved steam engine at Soho to raise and return the water, extended the powers of the water mill, which Mr. Boulton therefore a second time rebuilt, upon a much larger scale, and several engines were afterwards erected here for other purposes, whereby the manufactory was greatly extended, the source of mechanical power being thus unlimited.

“ In order to obtain the desired degree of perfection in the manufacture of their steam engines, Messrs. Boulton and Watt established a large and complete iron foundry at Smethwick, a convenient distance westward from Soho, and having the advantage of communication with the Birmingham Canal.

“ The applicability of the steam engine to the purpose and various processes of coining, led to the erection here, in 1788, of a *coining mill*, which was afterwards much improved, and acquired great celebrity for efficiency and dispatch.

“ Previous to Mr. Boulton's engagement to supply Government with copper coin, in order to bring his apparatus to the greatest perfection, he exercised it in coining silver money for Sierra Leone and the African Company, and copper for the East India Company and Bermudas. Various beautiful medals were likewise struck here from time to time, for the purpose of employing ingenious

artists, and encouraging the revival of that branch of art, which in this kingdom had long been on the decline.

“ The penny and two-penny pieces of 1797, the halfpence and farthings of 1799, the pence, halfpence, and farthings of 1806 and 1807 (all of excellent pattern and workmanship), and we believe the whole of the copper coinage of George the Third, which forms the principal part of that now in circulation, issued from the Soho Mint; at which the five shilling bank tokens issued in 1804 were also struck, and a coinage for the Russian government.

“ In a national view Mr. Boulton’s undertakings were highly valuable and important. By collecting round him artists of various descriptions, rival talents were called forth, and by successive competition have been multiplied to an extent highly beneficial to the public. A barren heath has been covered with plenty and population, and these works, which in their infancy were little known or attended to, now cover several acres, give employment to some hundreds of persons, and are said to be the first of their kind in Europe. Mr. Boulton ultimately purchased the fee-simple of Soho and much of the adjoining land.

“ The liberal spirit and taste of the worthy proprietor was further exercised not only in the mansion, wherein he resided, but in the adjoining gardens, groves, and pleasure grounds, which, at the same time that they form an agreeable separation from the residence, render Soho, with its fine pool of water, a much-admired scene of picturesque beauty, where the sweets of solitude and retirement may be enjoyed, as if far distant from the busy hum of men.

“ Two fine engravings, by Eginton, one of the manufactory, and the other of the mansion, at Soho, are contained in the second volume of Shaw’s History of Stafford-

shire, from which work much of the foregoing account is abridged.

“The elder Messrs. Boulton and Watt are now both deceased,\* but the various manufactories are continued under several firms by the son of each, *Matthew Robinson Boulton* and *James Watt*.

Besides the iron-foundry, the making of steam engines, copying machines, and fire-irons, the rolling of metals, &c. the principal heads of manufacture at this distinguished place are buttons, steel goods, plated and silver wares, toys, medals, &c. of which a splendid assortment may be inspected in the shew-rooms; but it is understood that the *manufactory* is not, as heretofore, open to the gratification of the curious.”

*Sir Edward Thomason's Manufactory, Church Street.*

Birmingham, famous for many things, can now boast of a *knighted button maker*, who is also vice-consul for France, Austria, Russia, Prussia, Spain, Portugal, Brazil, Sweden, and Norway, with sundry other titles too numerous to mention. Thus it will be seen that the *Brummagem buttons* are not to be slighted, although they have formed a subject for ridicule, for all grades of society, from the shoeblack to the lady's maid, both in London and the country.

Sir Edward's shew-rooms are considered to be the most complete of the kind in Birmingham, and not to be equalled by many in England. He has a splendid exhi-

\* “The late Mr. Boulton died in August, 1809, in his eighty-first year, and the late Mr. Watt, in August, 1819, at the age of eighty-three. They were both interred in the neighbouring Church of Handsworth, wherein monuments are placed to their memory. That of Mr. Watt is a fine piece of sculpture by Chantrey, being a full-length statue and likeness of the deceased, in a sitting position, elevated on a pedestal, and placed in an elegant gothic chapel erected for its reception.”

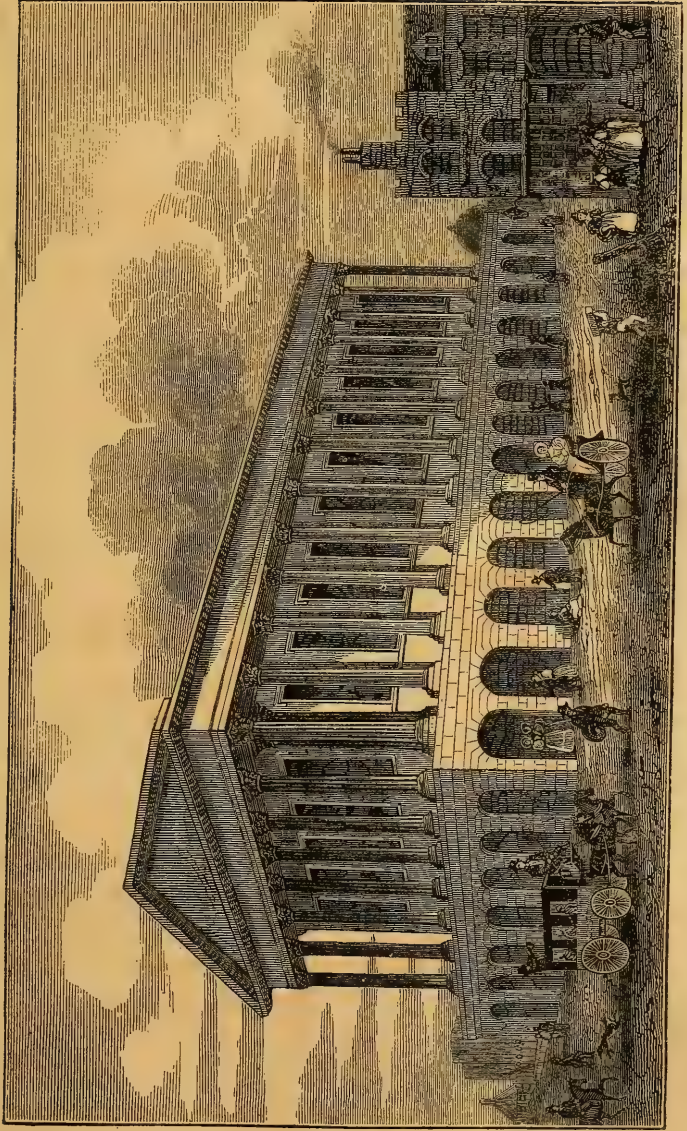
bition of costly ornamental productions, in gold, silver, brass, and bronze, with a great variety of medals of the finest workmanship.

### *Town Hall.*

Erected under the inspection of the Commissioners of the Street Act, passed 1828. This splendid building was erected from designs, drawn by Joseph Hansom, who in conjunction with Mr. Welsh, his partner, contracted for its erection, for the sum of £17,000, with about £1,700 for extras.

A steam engine was employed to saw the stone; two hundred thousand bricks were made from the clay out of the foundation. A new species of machinery was constructed by Mr. Hansom, to raise the principals of the roof whole, to the top of the building, a height of seventy feet from the outside of the building. An accident occurred in this operation by the hook of a pulley block breaking, which killed two workmen. They were interred in St. Phillip's church-yard, and a monument erected to their memory, by their employers and their fellow workmen. The monument consists of the base of one of the pillars, wrought by one of the sufferers, for the Hall. The ceiling was framed in compartments and lathed ready for fixing. The scaffold for the interior and ceiling were constructed upon a novel plan; yet with all the economy that could possibly be used in the building, and in procuring materials for its erection, the parties became bankrupt, and were unable to finish the work, having undertaken it at about £4,000 less than ought to have been paid for its erection. The sureties have been obliged to pay the difference; and Mr. Foster, of Liverpool, has been engaged to finish the work, which was in a very forward state at the time of the bankruptcy. The building was commenced on the 27th of April, 1832, and although





TOWN HALL.



prepared for the Musical Festival, in October, 1834, it was not finished till 1835. The external length of the building is one hundred and sixty feet, and the width about ninety feet. The internal length of the large Hall is one hundred and forty feet by sixty-five feet, and the height to the ceiling is sixty-five feet. The basement is twenty-three feet. There are thirty-two fluted Corinthian columns, after an example of the Temple of Jupiter Stator at Rome, thirty-six feet high, and three feet six inches in diameter, which supports the entablature. The entablature is nine feet, and the pediment fifteen feet, making a total height of eighty-three feet to the acroterum. The building is brick, faced with Anglesea marble, which is very hard and durable. An addition was made to the arcade, in front, without adding to the beauty of the work or much to the utility of it, contrary to the original design, which was to have been a single arched piazza, instead of a double one, as it now stands. The internal construction of the hall is convenient, and fully answers the expectations of the public. It is in fact considered the best Musical Hall in the kingdom. There is a narrow gallery on each side, and one of considerable depth at the east end. The west end is occupied by the organ and convenience for the performers. Fluted Corinthian pilasters ornament the spaces between the windows. The ceiling is a chaste and splendid specimen of art, and universally admired. There are two tier of low corridors along each side of the building, communicating with the floor and the side galleries. The Hall was opened for the Musical Festival, in October, 1834, and has since been used for several concerts, political, and other meetings. At the nomination of members for the borough, January 7, 1835, the large gallery was so much crowded that the panneling in front gave way, and many persons were precipitated into the body of the hall. Several

were severely hurt and many bruised. The hall will seat about four thousand persons, and will hold from eight to ten thousand standing.

### *The Town Hall Organ.*

This truly magnificent instrument was built by Mr. Hill, of London. The term "built" is with propriety applied to this organ, which is thirty-five feet wide, fifteen feet thick, and forty-five feet high.

It has four rows of finger keys, of six octaves each, extending from C an octave below C C, to C in altissimo. The three lower rows, act as is usual in large organs, viz., on the choir organ, the great organ, and the swell, which descends to C C. The fourth, or upper row, has no pipes of its own, but any stop in the choir or swell may be played upon it, *whether it is or is not drawn out* for use on any other row of keys. To effect this, every stop in the choir organ and swell, has *two* draw-stops, one of which will cause it to sound from the usual finger keys, the other will cause *the same pipes* to sound from the upper or combination row.

A peal of small bells, which are fixed in the swell, are played on by the upper row of keys only; they have a novel, but not a very rich effect. Below the finger keys, and on a level with the floor, are two octaves of pedal keys. These act upon the corresponding finger keys of the choir and great organ at pleasure, and have besides, two open double diapason stops, the one wood, the other metal, which are played by them only. The largest pipe of each of these stops is thirty-two feet long, and sounds a note two octaves below C C. There are also two octaves of finger keys on the left of the great row, which act upon the pedals, thus enabling a second performer to take the bass part, without inconveniencing the principal performer by sitting with him.



These and many other combinations too numerous to mention, enable the performer to produce an almost endless variety of tone and power; the mechanism by which they are accomplished is highly ingenious, and extremely complicated; yet unnecessary weight and friction have been so carefully avoided, that the touch is not unpleasantly stiff. The total number of stops is upwards of forty, but the draw-stops, from the causes before mentioned, amount to upwards of sixty. The tone is sublime and soothing, and not in the slightest degree harsh or coarse. The full effect, however, has not yet been heard, as from some strange delay, several of the reed stops have not yet (Feb. 1835) been put in their places. An inspection of the interior of this immense piece of mechanism is a high treat to every scientific person, and never fails to produce feelings of admiration and astonishment, with a deeper conviction of the extent and variety of those "capacious powers" that "lie folded up in man."

The organ is the property of the Governors of the General Hospital, and was built at their expense, (assisted by voluntary contributions,) for the use of the musical festivals. It is an honour to the builder, to its spirited proprietors, and to the town in which it stands.

There are about one hundred pipes, from sixteen to thirty-two feet long. The total number, it is expected, will exceed six thousand. The longest metal pipe is thirty-five feet long, and  $20\frac{1}{2}$  inches diameter, the foot of which weighs two hundred and twenty-four pounds. The principal pipe, has a cubical area of two hundred and seventeen feet. The timber required in the erection of the instrument was about twenty-five tons, and the metal about fifteen tons, making the total weight of the instrument about forty tons. The external design is by Mr. Mackenzie, which harmonizes with the style of the building.

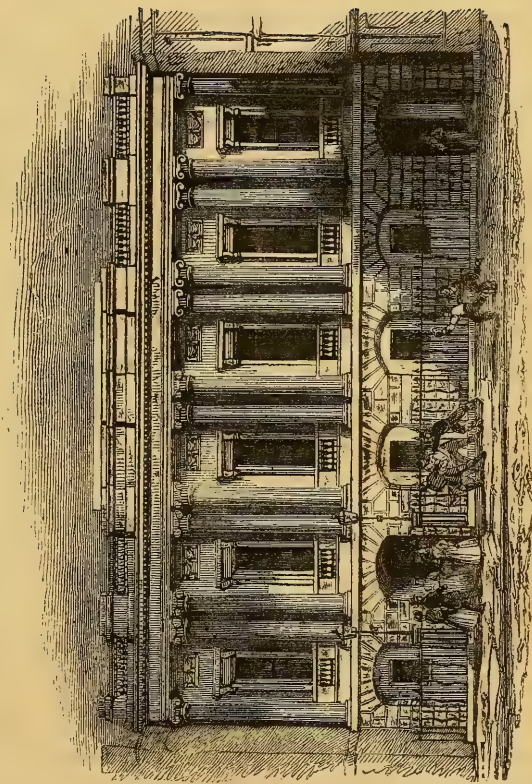
*Prison.*

If the subject is little, but little can be said of it ; I shall shine as dimly in this chapter on confinement, as in that on government. The traveller who sets out lame, will probably limp through the journey.

Many of my friends have assured me, “that I must have experienced much trouble in writing the history of Birmingham.” But I assure them in return, that I range those hours among the happiest of my life ; and part of that happiness may consist in delineating the bright side of human nature. Pictures of deformity, whether of body or of mind, disgust—the more they approach towards beauty, the more they charm.

All the chapters which compose this work were formed with pleasure, except the latter part of that upon *births and burials* ; there, being forced to apply to the parish books, I *figured* with some obstruction. Poor *Allsop*, full of good nature and affliction, fearful lest I should sap the church, could not receive me with kindness. When a man’s resources lie, within himself, he draws at pleasure ; but when necessity throws him upon the parish, he draws in small sums, and with difficulty.

I either *have* or *shall* remark, for I know not in what niche I shall exhibit this posthumous chapter, drawn like one of our sluggish bills, *three months after date*, “that Birmingham does not abound in villainy, equal to some other places ; that the hand employed in business has less time, and less temptation, to be employed in mischief ; and that one magistrate alone, corrected the enormities of this numerous people, many years before I knew them, and twenty-five after.” I add, that the ancient lords of Birmingham, among their manorial privileges, had the grant of a gallows, for capital punishment ; but as there are no traces even of the name in the whole manor, I am



THE PRISON AND PUBLIC OFFICE,  
*Moor Street, Birmingham.*





persuaded no such thing was ever erected, and perhaps the *anvil* prevented it.

Many of the rogues among us are not of our own growth, but are drawn hither, as in London, to shelter in a crowd, and the easier in that crowd to pursue their game. Some of them fortunately catch, from example, the arts of industry, and become useful; others continue to cheat for one or two years, till frightened by the grim aspect of justice, they decamp.

Our vile and obscure prison, termed *The Dungeon*, is a farther proof how little that prison has been an object of notice, consequently of use.

Anciently the lord of a manor exercised a sovereign power in his little dominion; held a tribunal on his premises, to which was annexed a prison, furnished with implements for punishment; these were claimed by the lords of Birmingham. This crippled species of jurisprudence, which sometimes made a man judge in his own cause, from which there was no appeal, prevailed in the highlands of Scotland so late as the rebellion in 1745, when the peasantry by act of parliament, were restored to freedom.

Early perhaps in the sixteenth century, when the house of Birmingham, who had been chief gaolers, were fallen, a building was erected, which covered the east end of New Street, called the Leather Hall; the upper part consisted of a room about fifty feet long, where the public business of the manor was transacted. The under part was divided into several; one of these small rooms was used for a prison; but about the year 1728, *while men slept an enemy came*, a private agent to the lord of the manor, and erased the Leather-hall and the Dungeon, erected three houses on the spot, and received their rents till 1776, when the town purchased them for £500, to open the way. A narrow passage on the south will be remembered for half a century to come, by the name of the *Dungeon-entry*.

A dry cellar, opposite the demolished hall, was then appropriated for a prison, till the town of all bad places chose the worst, the bottom of Peck-lane ; dark, narrow, and unwholesome within ; crowded with dwellings, filth, and distress without, the circulation of air is prevented.

As a growing taste for public buildings has for some time appeared among us, we might, in the construction of a prison, unite elegance and use ; and the west angle of that land between New Street and Mount Pleasant, might be suitable for the purpose ; an airy spot in the junction of six streets. The proprietor of the land, from his known attachment to Birmingham, would, I doubt not, be much inclined to grant a favour.—Thus I have expended ten *score* words, to tell the world what another would have told them in *ten*—“ That our prison is wretched, and we want a better”.

In 1806 a portion of the present Public Office and Prison was erected in Moor Street, upon land belonging to the Free Grammar School, and was improved and enlarged about the year 1830. It is now one of the most commodious Public Offices in the kingdom. The lower apartments are used by the commissioners of the Street Act, and for a variety of other public purposes. The second floor is fitted up for clerks’ offices, magistrates’ private rooms, and the public court, in which is a gallery conveniently fitted up with seats for the accommodation of spectators. Behind the Public Office is the Prison, and Prison-Keeper’s House. The Prison Yard is about twelve feet below the level of the street, and this circumstance has no doubt conferred upon it the well known cognomen of “ *The Hole*.” It is divided into two parts, intended no doubt to keep the males and females apart, but some of the males generally mix with the females during the day. The yards are small, and it seems a matter of surprise that the premises at the back were not enlarged as well as at

the front. There are two rows of cells, one upon a level with the yards, and the other nearly upon a level with the street. The cells are filthy, and are all exposed to the open air, the doors of which open into the yard of the lower tier, and to a long open gallery in the upper. The door serving two purposes, to admit the prisoner and the light, there being no windows except a square opening in the upper part of the door, unglazed; they are, in fact, more like dog kennels than sleeping rooms for human beings. The bedsteads are iron, conveniently fitted up with manacles for hands and feet. The prison keeper supplies accommodation to those who can pay for it in the house, at a charge of one shilling per night; Mr. George Redfern, who is the present prison keeper, is a man highly qualified for this situation. The county is put to a great expense, in the removal of the prisoners to the County Gaol of Warwick, a distance of twenty miles, and by the attendance of witnesses and officers at the assizes and sessions. If a prisoner is committed for seven days only, he must be conveyed to Warwick for that term. The prison allowance consists of about one pound of bread, and a small portion of cheese, served at twice daily.

#### *County Gaol of Warwick.*

It may not be uninteresting to the reader to give some account of this receptacle for the unfortunate tradesman, and the fraudulent bankrupt, the petty thief, the vagrant and the midnight robber, the offender against the laws of nature and the laws of tyranny, the man who commits the enormous crime of selling cheap news to his neighbour, and he who knocks out his neighbour's brains. The disobedient apprentice and the wholesale swindler; no distinction is made here, all are treated alike except the debtors. A caravan is kept to convey the prisoners to the gaol which usually goes twice a-week, often carrying

ten to twelve ; as soon as the prisoners arrive, their irons are taken off, and they are delivered over with a regular invoice of the cargo to the jailer or his deputy, who gives a regular receipt to the prison keeper of Birmingham ; the prisoners are then placed in a small crib, about four feet square, from which they are taken out one by one to be stripped, and searched by the turnkeys, who take every thing from them, except their wearing apparel. Their linen is at this time marked with large letters, the initials of their names ; they are then taken to the bath room, where the county barber crops their hair quite close, they are then obliged to wash in a warm bath prepared for the purpose ; when they have thus received a county crop, and have been dubbed knights of the bath, a suit of clothes is brought for them, not of purple and fine linen, but of a thick coarse drab woollen cloth, no stockings, and a hurden shirt. The prisoners' clothes are taken to the stove room to be fumigated, and the prisoners to their apartments, having been supplied with their eating tools and vessels, which consist of a wooden tub hooped with iron, that holds about a quart, and a wooden spoon. The accommodation consists of a court yard to walk in, paved with stone. A hall in which is a fireplace, and seats fixed to the wall after the manner of some public-house kitchens, one large table, a coal box and a cupboard. The sleeping apartments consist of single or double bedded cells ; either one person is put in a cell, or three, sometimes four. The walls are very thick, of stone arched over at the top, the windows are about five feet from the floor, and are guarded within and without by strong cross bars. The entrance to each cell is guarded by a strong iron door, fastened with massive bolts. The floors are all brick, and the prisoners are not allowed to take in their shoes. The beds are straw, the bedsteads iron, with wood instead of sacking. The prison fare consists of about seven pounds and a half



of bread per week, a small loaf being served out every morning at nine o'clock, one pound of meat in two portions, one on Monday the other on Thursday, two quarts of potatoes in two portions, Tuesday and Friday, one quart of gruel on Sunday morning, Wednesdays and Saturdays bread only is allowed. After trial or conviction no prisoner is allowed anything but the above diet. Prisoners before trial are allowed to purchase to the amount of threepence daily, of tea, coffee, sugar, butter or milk, but whether before or after trial no description of food, is allowed to be sent by the friends of the prisoner; no books are allowed except the Bible and Church Prayer Book, newspapers are prohibited. The church service is performed twice each week, Sunday and Wednesday. The prisoners are locked up at dusk each day, and turned out at daylight in the morning. The male prisoners are divided into five gangs, classed according to *merit*. All letters and parcels are opened by the jailer. The females are apart from the males. Prisoners are allowed to see friends only in the presence of two turnkeys through iron bars. The debtors occupy another part of the prison, and although they attend in the same chapel with the felons and females, they never see either. The felons' prison is clean and well conducted in some respects, but little calculated to improve the morals of the inmates, who have no means of diverting their minds, but by the most filthy conversation, recounting the various exploits of their lives, and discussing the best means of performing the various operations of their craft. Send a little offender to a gaol, and nine cases out of ten you make an accomplished rogue. The long period of confinement some prisoners have to endure previous to trial, frequently upon what proves very questionable evidence, is a great hardship, and ought to be altered. The time frequently extends from the beginning of October, to the end of

March, putting the county to great expense, and decreasing the chances of conviction. The debtors' prison consists of two parts; one occupied by poor debtors who have lodging free, and the county allowance of bread. The other by the master debtors who pay two shillings and sixpence per week each, for their beds, and supply themselves with coals, candles, furniture for their rooms, and every other requisite. Eatables of all sorts are admitted. Ale is limited to one quart per day, or a pint of wine to each man, spirits of all kinds are prohibited. The debtors are locked up at nine o'clock in winter, and half-past nine in summer, but have access to each other's rooms. If the creditor had any chance of obtaining his debt before the arrest that chance now becomes hopeless; a new *chum* is immediately besieged by the inmates and lawyers who soon persuade him to "go through the court," that is to take the benefit of the Insolvent Debtors' Act, and cheat all his creditors; many friendly arrests takes place, and thus the Insolvent Act, is made subservient to the basest frauds. This part of the prison is often the scene of riot and drunkenness to a serious extent, the windows and doors are demolished with the greatest recklessness, and every person is subject to much annoyance, who does not join in these midnight tumults, in short, a man cannot help being contaminated, more or less, in this sink of poverty, wretchedness, *infamy*, and *vice*.

### *Petition for a Corporation.*

Every man seems fond of two things, riches and power; this fondness necessarily springs from the heart, otherwise order would cease. Without the desire of riches, a man would not preserve what he has, nor provide for the future, "My thoughts (says a worthy Christian) are not of this world; I desire but one guinea to carry me through it."

Supply him with that guinea, and he wishes another, lest the first should be defective.

If it is necessary a man should possess property, it is just as necessary he should possess a power to protect it, or the world would quickly bully him out of it; this power is founded on the laws of his country, to which he adds, by way of supplement, bye-laws founded upon his own prudence. Those who possess riches, well know they are furnished with wings, and can scarcely be kept from flying.

The man who has power to secure his wealth, seldom stops there; he, in turn, is apt to triumph over him who has less. Riches and power are often seen to go hand in hand. Industry produces property; which, when a little matured, looks out for command; thus the inhabitants of Birmingham, who have generally something upon the anvil besides iron, eighty years ago having derived wealth from diligence, wished to derive power from charter; therefore petitioned the crown, that Birmingham might be erected into a corporation. Tickled with the title of alderman, dazzled with the splendour of a silver mace, a furred gown, and a magisterial chair, they could not see the interest of the place; had they succeeded, that amazing growth would have been crippled, which has since astonished the world, and those trades have been fettered which have proved the greatest benefit.

When a man loudly pleads for public good, we shrewdly suspect a private emolument lurking beneath. There is nothing more detrimental to good neighbourhood than men in power, where power is unnecessary; free as the air we breathe, we subsist by our freedom; no command is exercised among us, but that of the laws, to which every discreet citizen pays attention—the magistrate who distributes justice, tinctured with mercy, merits the thanks of society. A train of attendants, a white wand, and a few

fiddles, are only the fringe, lace, and trappings of charteral office.

Birmingham, exclusive of her market, ranks among the very lowest order of townships ; every petty village claims the honour of being a constablewick—we are no more. Our immunities are only the trifling privileges anciently granted to the lords ; and two thirds of these are lost. But, notwithstanding this seemingly forlorn state, perhaps there is not a place in the British dominions, where so many people are governed by so few officers ; pride, therefore, must have dictated the humble petition before us.

I have seen a copy of this petition, signed by eighty-four of the inhabitar's ; and though without a date, seems to have been addressed to king George the First, about 1716 ; it alleges, “ That Birmingham is, of late years, become very populous, from its great increase of trade ; is much superior to any town in the county, and but little inferior to any inland town in the kingdom ; that it is governed only by a constable, and enjoys no more privileges than a village ; that there is no justice of peace in the town, nor any in the neighbourhood, who dares act with vigour ; that the country abounds with rioters, who, knowing the place to be void of magistrates, assemble in it, pull down the meeting-houses, defy the king, openly avow the pretender, threaten the inhabitants, and oblige them to keep watch in their own houses ; that the trade decays, and will stagnate, if not relieved. To remedy these evils, they beseech his majesty to incorporate the town, and grant such privileges as will enable them to support their trade, the king's interest, and destroy the villainous attempts of the jacobites. In consideration of the requested charter, they make the usual offering of *lives and fortunes.*”

A petition and the petitioner, like Janus with his two faces, looks different ways ; it is often treated as if it said



one thing, and meant another ; or as if it said any thing but truth. Its use, in some places, is to *lie on the table*. Our humble petition, by some means, met with the fate it deserved.

We may remark, a town without a charter, is a town without a shackle. If there was then a necessity to erect a corporation, because the town was large, there is none now, though larger ; the place was governed a thousand years ago, when only a twentieth its present magnitude, also be governed as well a thousand years hence, it may if it should swell to ten times its size.

The *pride* of our ancestors was hurt by a petty constable ; the *interest* of us, their successors, would be hurt by a mayor ; a more simple government cannot be instituted, or one more efficacious ; that of some places is designed for parade, ours for use ; and both answers their end. A town governed by a multitude of governors, is the most likely to be ill-governed.

The legislature have some time had a bill in contemplation, to incorporate large towns, but at present it is uncertain when it will come into operation, and what will be its effects is equally uncertain, but I hope the people will bestir themselves, and insist upon every householder having a vote in the election of the men who are to govern them, and that in no case an officer shall be elected for life, and also see that the property qualification is not too high.

### *Military Association.*

The use of arms is necessary to every man who has something to lose, or something to gain. No property will protect itself. The English have liberty and property to lose, but nothing to win. As every man is born free, the West-Indian slaves have liberty to gain, but nothing to lose. If an African prince attempts to sell his people, he ought to be first sold himself ; and the buyer who acts so

daringly opposite to the Christian precept, is yet more blameable. He ought to have the first whip, often mended, worn out upon his own back.

Upon a change of the Northean ministry, in 1782, the new premier, in a circular letter, advised the nation to arm, as the dangers of invasion threatened us with dreadful aspect. Intelligence from a quarter so authentic, locked up the door of private judgment, or we might have considered, that even without alliance, and with four principal powers upon our hands, we were rather gaining ground; that the Americans were so far from attacking us, that they wished us to run ourselves out of breath to attack them; that Spain had slumbered over a seven years war; that the Dutch, provoked at their governors, for the loss of their commerce, were more inclinable to invade themselves than us; and that as France bore the weight of the contest, we found employment for her arms without invasion; but, perhaps, the letter was only an artifice of the new state doctor, to represent his patient in a most deplorable state, as a compliment to his own merit in recovering her.

Whatever was the cause, nothing could be more agreeable than this letter to the active spirit of Birmingham. Public meetings were held. The rockets of war were squibbed off in the newspapers. The plodding tradesman and the lively hero assembled together in arms, and many a trophy was won in thought.

Each man purchased a genteel blue uniform, decorated with epaulets of gold, which, together with his accoutrements, cost about £17. The gentleman, the apprentice, &c. to the number of seventy, united in a body, termed by themselves, *The Birmingham Association*; by the wag, *the brazen walls of the town*. Each was to be officer and private by ballot, which gives an idea of equality, and was called to exercise once a-week.

The high price of provisions, and the seventeenth of October, brought a dangerous mob into Birmingham. They wanted bread; so did we. But little conference passed between them and the inhabitants. They were quiet; we were pleased; and, after an hour or two's stay, they retreated in peace.

In the evening, after the enemy were fled, our champions beat to arms, breathing vengeance against the hungry crew; and, had they returned, some people verily thought our valiant heroes would have *discharged* at them.

However laudable a system, if built upon a false basis, it will not stand. Equality and command, in the same person, are incompatible; therefore cannot exist together. Subordination is necessary in every class of life, but particularly in the military. Nothing but severe discipline can regulate the boisterous spirit of an army.

A man may be bound to another, but if he commands the bandage, he will quickly set himself free. This was the case with the military association. As their uniform resembled that of a commander, so did their temper. There were none to submit. The result was, the farce ended, and the curtain dropt in December, by a quarrel with each other; and, like *John* and *Lilborn*, almost with themselves.

When Napoleon, the then first consul of France, threatened to invade England, the men of Birmingham revived their military ardour, and formed the Birmingham Volunteers; some joined from a love of country, more from novelty, and the most to prevent them being drawn in the militia then embodied, the rate of substitutes being rather high. Of the exploits of these worthies, many amusing anecdotes are still told by their companions in arms.

## OCCURRENCES.

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### *Earthquake, &c.*

It is a doctrine singular and barbarous, but it is nevertheless true, that *destruction is necessary*. Every species of animals would multiply beyond their bounds in the creation, were not means devised to thin their race.

I perused an author in 1738, who asserts, "the world might maintain sixty times the number of its present inhabitants." Two able disputants, like those in religion, might maintain sixty arguments on the subject, and like them, leave the matter where they found it. But if restraint was removed, the present number would be multiplied into sixty, in much less than one century.

Those animals appropriated for use, are suffered, or rather invited, to multiply without limitation. But *luxury* cuts off the beast, the pig, the sheep and the fowl, and ill treatment the horse; vermin of every kind, from the lion to the louse, are hunted to death; a perpetual contest seems to exist between them and us; they for their preservation, and we for their extinction. The kitten and the puppy are cast *into* the water to end their lives; *out* of which the fishes are drawn to end theirs—animals are every where devoured by animals. Their grand governor, man himself, is under control; some by religious, others by interested motives. Even the fond parent seldom wishes to increase the number of those objects, which of all others he values most! In civilized nations the superior class are restrained by the laws of honour, the inferior by those of bastardy; but, notwithstanding these restraints,



the human race would increase beyond measure, were they not taken off by casualties. It is in our species alone, that we often behold the infant flame extinguished by the wretched nurse.

Three dreadful calamities attending existence, are inundations, fires, and earthquakes; devastation follows their footsteps. But *one* calamity, more destructive than them all, rises from man himself, *war*.

Birmingham, from its elevation, is nearly exempt from the flood; our inundations, instead of sweeping away life and fortune, sweep away the filth from the kennel.

It is amazing, in a place crowded with people, that so *much* business, and so *little* mischief is done by fire; we abound more with party walls, than with timber buildings. Utensils are ever ready to extinguish the flames, and a generous spirit to use them. I am not certain that a conflagration of £50 damage has happened within memory, except with design.

I have only one earthquake to record, felt Nov. 15, 1772, at four in the morning; it extended about eight miles in length, from Hall Green to Erdington, and four in breadth, of which Birmingham was part. The shaking of the earth continued about five seconds, with unequal vibration, sufficient to awake a gentle sleeper, throw down a knife carelessly reared up, or rattle the brass drops of a chest of drawers. A flock of sheep, in a field near Yardley, frightened at the trembling, ran away. No damage was sustained.

*Pitmore and Hammond.*

Thomas Pitmore, a native of Cheshire, after consuming a fortune of £700 was corporal in the second regiment of foot; and John Hammond, an American by birth, was drummer in the thirty-sixth; both of recruiting parties in Birmingham.

Having procured a brace of pistols, they committed several robberies in the dark, on the highways.

At eight in the evening of November 22, 1780, about five hundred yards short of the four mile stone in the Coleshill Road, they met three butchers of Birmingham, who closely followed each other in their return from Rugby fair. One of the robbers attempted the bridle of the first man, but his horse, being young, started out of the road, and ran away. The drummer then attacked a second, Wilfred Barwick, with "Stop your horse," and that moment, through the agitation of a timorous mind, discharged a pistol, and lodged a brace of slugs in the bowels of the unfortunate Barwick, who exclaimed, "I am a dead man!" and fell.

The corporal instantly disappeared, and was afterwards, by the light of the snow upon the ground, seen retreating to Birmingham. The drummer ran forwards about forty yards, and over a stile into Ward-end Field. A fourth butcher of their company, and a lad, by this time came up, who, having heard the report of a pistol, seen the flash, and the drummer enter the field, leaped over the hedge in pursuit of the murderer. A fray ensued, in which the drummer was seized, who desired them not to take his life, but leave him to the laws of his country.

Within half an hour, the deceased and the captive appeared together in the same room, at the Horse shoe. What must then be the feelings of a mind, susceptible of impression by nature, but weakly calloused over by art? This is one instance, among many, which shews us a life of innocence, is alone a life of happiness.

The drummer impeached his companion, who was perhaps the most guilty of the two, and they were both that night lodged in the dungeon.

Upon the trial, March 31, 1781, the matter was too plain to be controverted. The criminals were executed, and

hung in chains at Washwood Heath, April 2; the corporal at the age of twenty-five, and the drummer twenty two.

Public executions at Birmingham have not been frequent. A man named Matsell, was executed on Snow Hill, for shooting a night-constable named Twiford, when on duty, and since that time eight men were executed at Washwood Heath, for various crimes; several for the manufacture of money, for which Birmingham is somewhat famed.

### *Riots.*

Three principal causes of riot are, the low state of wages, the difference in political or religious sentiment, and the rise of provisions: these causes, like inundations, produce dreadful effects, and like them, return at uncertain periods.

There is no nation fonder of their king than the English; which is a proof that monarchy suits the genius of the people; there is no nation more jealous of his power, which proves that liberty is a favourite maxim. Though the laws have complimented him with *much*, yet he well knows, a prerogative upon the stretch, is a prerogative in a dangerous state. The more a people value their prince, the more willing are they to contend in his favour.

The people of England revered the memory of their beloved Saxon kings, and doubly lamented their fall, with that of their liberties. They taxed themselves into beggary, to raise the amazing sum of £100,000 to release Richard the First, unjustly taken captive by Leopold. They protected Henry the Fifth from death, at Agincourt, and received that death themselves. They covered the extreme weakness of Henry the Sixth, who *never said a good thing, or did a bad one*, with the mantle of royalty; when a character like his, without a crown, would have been hunted through life; they gave him the title of *good king Henry*, which would well have suited, had the word *king*

been omitted: they sought him a place in the calendar of saints, and made *him* perform the miracles of an angel when dead, who could never perform the works of a man when living. The people showed their attachment to Henry the Eighth, by submitting to the faggot and the block, at his command; and with their last breath praying for their butcher. Affection for Charles the First, induced four of his friends to offer their heads to save his.—The wrath, and the tears of the people, succeeded his melancholy exit. When James the Second eloped from the throne, and was casually picked up at Feversham, by his injured subjects, *they remembered he was their king*. The church and Queen Anne, like a joyous copartnership, were toasted together. The barrel was willingly emptied to honour the queen, and the toaster lamented he could honour her no more. The nation displayed their love to Charles the Second, by lameing the forests. His climbing the oak at Boscobel, has been the destruction of more timber than would have filled the harbour of Portsmouth; the tree which flourished in the field, was brought to die in the street. Birmingham, for ninety years, honoured him with her vengeance against the woods; and she is, at this day, surrounded with mutilated oaks, which stand as martyrs to royalty.

It is singular, that the oak, which assisted the devotion of the Britons, composed habitations for the people, and furniture for those habitations; that, while standing, was an ornament to the country that bore it, and afterwards guarded the land which nursed it, should be the cause of continual riots in the reign of George the First. We could not readily accede to a line of strangers, in preference to our ancient race of kings, though loudly charged with oppression.

Clubs and tumults supported the spirit of contention till 1745, when, as our last act of animosity, we crowned an



ass with turnips, in derision of one of the worthiest families that ever eat them.

Power in the hand of ignorance, is an edge-tool of the most dangerous kind. The scarcity in provisions in 1776, excited the murmurs of the poor. They began to breathe vengeance against the farmer, miller, and baker, for doing what they do themselves, procure the greatest price for their property. On the market day a common labourer, like Massaniello of Naples, formed the resolution to lead a mob. He therefore erected his standard, which was a mop inverted, assembled the crowd, and roared out the old note, "Redress of Grievances." The colliers, with all their dark retinue, were to bring destruction from Wednesbury. Amazement seized the town! the people of fortune trembled; John Wyrley, an able magistrate, for the first time frightened in office, with quivering lips, and a pale aspect, swore in about eighty constables, to oppose the rising storm, armed each of them with a staff of authority, warm from the turning lathe, and applied to the War-office for a military force.

The lime-powdered monarch began to fabricate his own laws, and direct the price of every article, which was punctually obeyed.

Port, or power, soon overcome a weak head; the more copious the draught, the more quick intoxication; he entered many of the shops, and was every where treated with the utmost reverence; took what goods he pleased, and distributed them among his followers; till one of the inhabitants, provoked beyond measure at his insolence, gave him a hearty kick on the posteriors, when the hero and his consequence, like that of Wat Tyler, fell together.—Thus ended a reign of seven hours; the sovereign was committed to prison, as sovereigns ought, in the abuse of power, and harmony was restored without blood.

*The Riots in 1791.*

## PREFACE.

It is uncommon to find two Prefaces to one book, written by the same author, which contradict each other, and yet are both true. I have celebrated, in the former preface, also in the work, that industry, civility, and peaceable turn, which does honour to a people—all founded in fact. But now we enter upon bigotry, licentiousness, disorder, insult, rapine, burnings, and murder. I am exceedingly sorry this is also true.

*The Riots of 1791.*

Before I proceed to give a detailed narrative of these disgraceful disturbances, I shall state the various causes by which they were occasioned; and more particularly, because an attempt has been made to fix the stigma upon Dr. Priestley. The following passage from his “Familiar Letters,” which were written in vindication of his principles, and in answer to attacks made upon him from the various pulpits, was quoted in parliament, and by the clergy of Birmingham, to excite the people against the Unitarians, or, as they were then more generally called, Presbyterians. Although it evidently contains nothing more than a *Rhetorical Figure*. “We are, as it were, laying gunpowder, grain by grain, under the old building of error and superstition, which a single spark may hereafter inflame, so as to produce an instantaneous explosion; in consequence of which that edifice, the erection of which has been the work of ages, may be overturned in a moment, and so effectually, as that the same foundation can never be built upon again.” The above passage was literally interpreted to mean that a plot was forming to *blow up the churches with the real chemical preparation of gunpowder*, and a report was in-

dustriously circulated, that the magistrates were unfavourable to the dissenters, and would afford encouragement to the destruction of their meeting-houses. And the very equivocal conduct and guilty supineness of the magistrates, from beginning to end of these outrages, tended to confirm the mob in these opinions. The first thing which arose to disturb the harmony of the town, was an attempt of a portion of the members of the old library, to vote in the Polemical Works of Dr. Priestley, which was opposed by the clergy, and others of the church party. One party accused the other of bigotry, the latter accused the former of infidelity. The clergy opposed the theological opinions of the Doctor, and attempted to stifle their propagation, conscientiously believing they were discharging their duty. The dispute was carried on with much bad feeling, animosity, and recrimination; and many bitter expressions were dropped, in the hearing of persons too ready to receive and misapply them.

Dr. Priestley, and the dissenters had been labouring to obtain a repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, which were eventually repealed in the year 1828. This also was made a serious charge against them. Their object was represented to be, to destroy our "holy religion, of church and state," and to recall the days of the "pope and the faggot." The Priestleians denied the truth of these statements, and endeavoured to define their object to be, to gain *religious liberty* for themselves and fellow-subjects, and declared their willingness, rather than involve their country in disputes, they would suspend or resign their claim. Still the absurd accusations against them gained credence, and were industriously circulated by hundreds of influential men. The clergy were encouraged by the success of two of their body, who had obtained mitres, by their able defence of the church, in controversy with the Doctor; the remainder were therefore looking forward for the

“mitres to shower down upon those heads that were aching for them.”

When much excitement was thus produced in the public mind, which, though latent, waited but the first favourable moment to develope itself, the friends of civil and religious freedom, determined to hold a meeting to commemorate the anniversary of the French Revolution, an event then unstained by those atrocities which afterwards covered it with eternal disgrace. The advertisement announcing this meeting, appeared July 7, accompanied with one, stating that a list of the names would be published; intended, no doubt, to intimidate the party, and calculated to menace the people. There were soon numerous indications, that this meeting would not be allowed to pass quietly away, its objects and intentions were most unfairly and industriously misrepresented; it was said they intended to destroy the church, and cashier the king, and commit other Jacobinical crimes.” As a counterbalance to the baneful effects which were likely to result from this “Jacobinical assembly,” the “church and king party” determined to hold a meeting, at the Swan Tavern, a house not many yards distant from the hotel, and thus, as it were, covertly manifest the desire they felt that the meeting should be disturbed. The liberal party, though determined to hold their meeting, took every possible precaution to allay the absurd fears which had been so industriously excited, but without effect, as the result proved. Yet it could not be foreseen, that such dreadful consequences would follow—nor would they, had there not been too much sympathy between the governed and the governors.

Other things proved that there was a predeterminate intention to disturb the meeting.—On the evening before it took place, an inflammatory handbill was dropped in a public-house, which raised the public mind to a state of frenzy; though a large reward was offered, and its contents



immediately contradicted, its authors were never discovered. All that is known of its history, is, that it was fabricated and printed in London, and that copies were privately dropped under the table of an inn. Early in the afternoon of the fatal 14th of July, a few persons were assembled before the hotel. One of the town beadles was heard to say, "This will be such a day as *we* never saw." The language was sufficiently expressive of guilty knowledge, which could barely be concealed; and the situation of the informant throws a suspicion upon persons who ought to have spent their lives in preaching peace and goodwill to all mankind.

At the meeting which began at three, and lasted perhaps until five o'clock, the following toasts were drunk:

1. The King and Constitution.

2. The National Assembly and patriots of France, whose patriotism and wisdom have raised twenty-six millions from the meanest condition of despotism, to the dignity and happiness of freemen.

3. The majesty of the people.

4. May the constitution be rendered perfect and perpetual.

5. May Great Britain, France, and Ireland, unite in perpetual friendship; and may their only rivalry be in the extension of peace and liberty, wisdom, and virtue.

6. The rights of man. May all nations have the wisdom to understand, and the courage to assert and defend them

7. The true friends of the constitution in this country, who wish to preserve its spirit by correcting its abuses.

8. May the people of England never cease to remonstrate, till their parliament becomes a true national representation.

9. The Prince of Wales.

10. The United States of America ; may they for ever enjoy the liberty which they so honourably acquired.

11. May the revolution in Poland prove the harbinger of a more perfect system of liberty extending to that great kingdom.

12. May the nations of Europe become so enlightened as never more to be deluded into savage wars, by the ambition of their rulers.

13. May the sword never be unsheathed, but for the defence and liberty of our country, and then may every one cast away the scabbard till the people are safe and free.

14. To the glorious memory of Hampden, Sidney, and other heroes of all ages and nations, who have fought and bled for liberty.

15. To the memory of Dr. Price, and all those illustrious sages who have enlightened mankind in the true principles of civil society.

16. Peace and goodwill to all mankind.

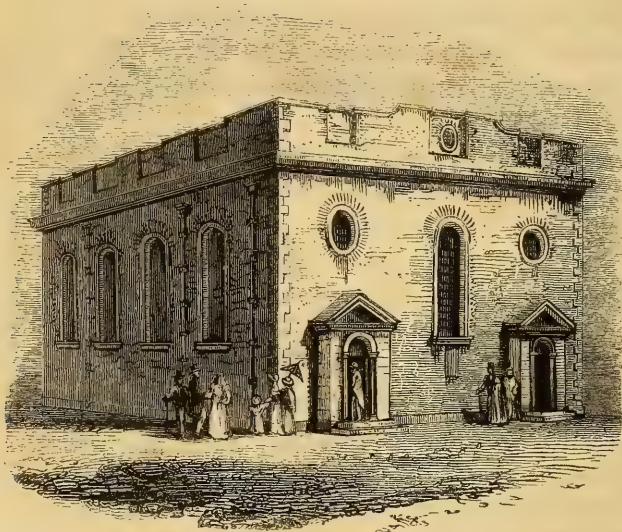
17. Prosperity to the town of Birmingham.

18. A happy meeting to the friends of liberty, on the 14th of July, 1792.

Upon the table, in the meeting, was placed a medallion of the king, encircled with glory ; on the right appeared an emblematical figure, representing British liberty ; on the left, another, representling Gallic slavery breaking her chains.

The people, at four o'clock, had assembled in great numbers, and their feelings were incensed by various means. "*Respectable*" persons were seen edging their way through the dense mass, dropping expressions of doubtful import, or making open accusations of the worst intentions. The "Church and King" party, at the Swan, were drinking "potations pottle deep" to the downfall of "Jacobins," and shouting with frenzied feelings, "Church





THE NEW MEETING HOUSE.



and King for ever." A spy went into the meeting at the hotel, and observing the fore-mentioned emblematical figures, returned to the people and declared "that they had cut off the king's head and placed it on the table." It was enough; the people were already sufficiently excited and countenanced, and only awaited the first moment to burst forth in uncontrolled fury. The windows of the hotel were immediately smashed to atoms. A gentleman of standing and station, exclaimed, "do not break Dadley's windows." The mob instantly rushed inside, and searched with determined rage for all who had attended the meeting. But they searched with more demoniacal fury and more barbarous intentions for the illustrious Priestly; he had not attended the meeting, and thus saved himself, and prevented the town from sustaining a greater and more indelible disgrace. After narrowly searching, and committing much damage on the premises, an attorney, afterwards rewarded with the situation of barrack-master, said, "You have done enough mischief here, go to the meetings." They therefore ran yelling and hooting to the New Meeting-House, and, without ceremony, broke it open; the pews, cushions, books, and pulpit, they dashed to pieces; in half an hour the place was blazing, and the savage multitude triumphing over it. The same fate attended the Old Meeting, where the mob allowed the firemen to save the neighbouring buildings.

The mob then undertook a march of more than a mile to the house of Dr. Priestly, but were met in Deritend by some young men who were receiving instructions gratuitously from the Doctor, in history, philosophy, and morals, who attempted, by persuasion, to divert their intentions, in which they succeeded until another herd of rioters came up, whose leader attributed the worst of motives to these young men, and finally succeeded in leading the rioters on to destroy the Doctor's house.

Many memorandums of discoveries in philosophy, and several manuscript works, which the Doctor declared he could never re-write, were thus irrecoverably lost to him and the world. A clergyman attended this mob, and was charged with examining and pocketing the manuscripts; with what intentions is not known. With this outrage closed the dreadful night of Thursday.

The authorities were not so desirous, as became men in their situations, to quell the riots; it is true that early on Friday, special constables were sworn in and ordered to assemble in St. Phillip's church-yard, but no magistrate appeared to lead and direct them. Much of that moral courage, which arises from the knowledge of acting under a responsible and lawful adviser, was therefore lost. Though they attacked and routed the mob in New Street, yet, for want of unity and confidence, they were defeated at Easy Hill, with the death of Mr. Thomas Ashwin, one of their number. It was noon this day, before the military force was sent for, and the messenger, by some unaccountable delay, did not arrive in London until the evening of Saturday. The rioters were addressed in mild and beseeching language, were called "friends and brother churchmen," were told that enough had been done, plainly insinuating that something required to be done. In answer for permission to repel force by force, the people were told that it must be at their own peril; and the local militia and police were resting in quiet, while the mob were plundering and alarming the neighbourhood.

About noon, on Friday, a body of ten thousand rioters attacked the mansion of John Ryland, Esq., at Easy Hill. The cellar, containing a stock of wine, valued £300, was entered with amazing eagerness, and its contents inebriated great numbers of the mob. Some remained so long, that when the roof fell in, they were hurried into eternity in a state of beastly intoxication.

The prisons and the Court of Requests were broken open, and the inmates swelled the number of the drunken mob, whose leaders had by this time adopted a disorderly method, in giving notice to the occupiers of property on which they intended to wreak their vengeance. While they were busied in destroying the former mansion, Mr. Hutton received notice that his property was devoted to destruction; as they were coming along New Street, some gentlemen advised them to disperse, when one of their leaders cried out "do not disperse, they want to sell us; if you will pull down Hutton's house, I will give you two guineas to drink, for it was owing to him I lost a cause in the Court of Requests." Mr. Hutton placed a large tub of ale before his door, and when it was consumed some of the rioters caught him, made him give them all the money he had or could immediately borrow, and hauled him away to a public house, at which they drank three hundred and twenty-nine gallons at his expense. He and his son repeatedly bought them off, but the house was ultimately gutted and the property destroyed, to the minutest article. Bordesley Hall was the next object of their vengeance, and it closed the work of Friday.

Saturday was ushered in by the destruction of Mr. Hutton's house at Bennetts Hill, Washwood Heath. The mansion of George Humphries, Esq., was next attacked; he had prepared for a vigorous defence, and the discharge of a pistol dispersed the first assailants; but the female part of his family becoming very much alarmed, obliged him to desist, and the mob returning with increased numbers, sacked and destroyed the internal parts of his house. The next sacrifice was the house of William Russel, Esq., at Showell Green; he also had prepared for a defence, but his defenders shrunk before the mob. The houses of Thomas Russell, Esq., and that of Mr. Hawkes,

were next attacked; they were plundered and greatly injured, but not burnt. Mosely Hall, the residence of Lady Carhampton, and property of John Taylor, Esq., was also destroyed, as were the houses of Messrs. Hobson, Piddock, and Harwood; these, with the plundering of the house of Mr. Coates, were the work of Saturday.

The mob had by this time betrayed an indiscriminate desire for plunder, all therefore looked eagerly forward to the arrival of an adequate force, to suppress the outrages and fear filled the minds of all the inhabitants. Some of the neighbouring nobility, justices, and gentlemen, arrived this day, to deliberate on the measures to be adopted; but no other means were used than persuasion, they harangued the mobs, and issued supplicating placards, without producing any effect. It was really an awful day, the peaceable inhabitants, saw the authorities either unable or unwilling to protect them. If they dared to stir abroad, they were made to vociferate the war cry of the party, "church and king for ever," and to chalk the same prostituted names on their doors and their shutters, every drunken ruffian claimed to be treated with civility, and called "a friend, and brother churchman," while hundreds of them lay in the streets in a stupified state of drunkenness. For three days, had a lawless mob reigned in this devoted town; for two nights had the inhabitants refrained from sleep, and a third night was destined to be passed in the same state of alarm and anxiety, doubtless there were brave hearts which swelled with a desire and determination to meet, and revenge themselves on that lawless mob, for all its atrocities, but the ardour was damped, and the determination arrested by the cold unwillingness, or *cowardly* inability of the authorities. The timid were shrinking with fear, the brave were burning with shame, the authorities were paralised, the liberal, the learned, and



the wealthy, were suffering persecution, and a lawless mob was triumphant. Such was the state of things when darkness closed in the day of Saturday.

It might be supposed from the burning zeal of the rioters for our "holy church," that they would have had some respect for its institutions, and have exemplified the purity of their faith, by passing the Sabbath in prayer and fasting, but their zeal allowed of no cessation, while any of their Father's business was unaccomplished, they therefore pursued the same conduct, which had characterized their religion and loyalty for the preceding three days. The Sunday's work began by attacking the house of Mr. Cox, which was licensed for public worship, at Wharstock, and after pledging each other to support church and king, with the contents of the cellar, they burnt the house.

Penetrating one mile farther, they arrived at Kingswood Meeting House, which with the Parsonage House, they laid in ashes; returning to Birmingham, they attacked Edgbaston Hall, the residence of Dr. Withering. But before their work was completed, they were informed that the light horse had arrived in Birmingham, they immediately decamped, and dispersed in as remarkable a manner, as they had risen, they were last heard of in the neighbourhood of Hales Owen, levying contributions on the farm houses, but the country people collected and soon dispersed them.

Ten persons who claimed compensation for losses sustained during the riots, were possessed of nearly a million sterling, and three who were merchants, employed more than ten thousand people. Thus some of the greatest benefactors of the inhabitants were endeavoured to be ruined, under the vague charge of an attempt to injure the church, the king, and themselves.

Though such a number of persons had engaged in these

proceedings, but few were apprehended, and fewer still punished.

Every obstacle was placed in the way of the sufferers obtaining redress. The following are the sums claimed and allowed by each :—

NAME.	CLAIM.			ALLOWED.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
John Taylor, Esq.	12670	9	2	9902	2	0
Thomas Russell, Esq.	285	11	7	160	0	0
William Piddock	556	15	7	300	0	0
John Harwood	143	12	6	60	0	0
Thomas Hawkes	304	3	8	90	15	8
——— Cox	336	13	7	254	0	0
Parsonage House	267	14	11	200	0	0
St. Dollax	198	8	9	139	17	6
William Russell, Esq.	1971	8	6	1600	0	0
John Ryland, Esq.	3240	8	4	2495	11	6
Old Meeting	1983	19	3	1390	7	5
George Humphreys, Esq.	2152	13	1	1855	11	0
Dr. Priestley	3628	8	9	2502	18	0
Thomas Hutton	619	2	2	619	2	2
William Hutton	6736	3	8	5390	17	0
	35095	13	6	26961	2	3

The loss of some of the parties was more than the claim. The real amount of loss to Mr. Taylor, amounted to upwards of £22,600; Dr. Priestley to about £4,500; Mr. William Hutton, £8,243. The expenses incurred in the recovery of the above sums amounted to about £13,000. Many of the sums obtained did not cover the expenses. Mr. Hutton's expenses amounted to £884 15s. 9d., and to add to the injustice of the case, two years were suffered to elapse before the sums awarded were paid over.



OLD MEETING, DESTROYED AT THE RIOTS, 1791.





*The Conjurors.*

No head is a vacuum. Some, like a paltry cottage, are ill accommodated, dark, and circumscribed; others are capacious as Westminster Hall. Though none are immense, yet they are capable of immense furniture. The more room is taken up by know'edge, the less remains for credulity. The more a man is acquainted with things, he is the more willing to *give up the ghost*. Every town and village, within my knowledge, has been pestered with spirits; which appear in horrid forms to the imagination in the winter night—but the spirits which haunt Birmingham, are those of industry and luxury.

If we examine the whole parish, we cannot produce one *old* witch; but we have plenty of young ones, who exercise a powerful influence over us. Should the ladies accuse the harsh epithet, they will please to consider, I allow them, what of all things they most wish for, *power*--therefore the balance is in my favour.

If we pass through the planetary worlds, we shall be able to muster up two conjurors, who endeavoured to *shine with the stars*. The first, John Walton, who was so busy in casting the nativity of others, that he forgot his own. Conscious of an application to himself, for the discovery of stolen goods, he employed his people to steal them. And though, for many years confined to his bed by infirmity, he could conjure away the property of others, and, for a reward, re-conjure it again.

The prevalence of this evil, induced the legislature, in 1725, to make the *reception* of stolen goods capital. The first sacrifice to this law, was the noted Jonathan Wild.

The officers of justice, in 1732, pulled Walton out of his bed, in an obscure cottage, one furlong from the town, now Brickiln Lane, carried him to prison, and from thence to

the gallows—they had better have carried him to the work-house, and his followers to the anvil.

To him succeeded Francis Kimberley, the only reasoning animal, who resided at No. 60, in Dale End, from his early youth to extreme age. An hermit in a crowd! The windows of his house were strangers to light. The shutters forgot to open; his chimney to smoke. His cellar, though amply furnished, never knew moisture.

He spent threescore years in filling six rooms with such trumpery as is just too good to be thrown away, and too bad to be kept. His life was as inoffensive as long. Instead of *stealing* the goods which other people used, he *purchased* what he could not use himself. He was not anxious what kind of property entered his house; if there was *bulk* he was satisfied.

His dark house, and his dark figure corresponded with each other. The apartments, choked up with lumber, scarcely admitted his body, though of the skeleton order. Perhaps leanness is an appendage to the science, for I never knew a corpulent conjurer. His diet, regular, plain, and slender, showed at how little expense life may be sustained. His library consisted of several thousand volumes, not one of which, I believe, he ever read; having written, in characters unknown to all but himself, his name, price, and date, in the title-page, he laid them by for ever. The highest pitch of his erudition was the annual almanack.

He never wished to approach a woman, or be approached by one. Should the rest of men, for half a century, pay no more attention to the fair, some angelic hand might stick up a note, like the arctic circle over one of our continents, *this world to be let*.

If he did not cultivate the human species, the spiders, more numerous than his books, enjoyed an uninterrupted reign of quiet. The silence of the place was not broken.

The broom, the book, the dust, or the web, was not disturbed. Mercury and his shirt changed their revolutions together ; and Saturn changed *his* with his coat. He died in 1756, as conjurers usually die, unlamented.

### *Public Roads.*

Man is evidently formed for society ; the intercourse of one with another, like two blocks of marble in friction, reduces the rough prominences of behaviour, and gives a polish to the manners.

Whatever tends to promote social connexion, improve commerce, or stamp an additional value upon property, is worthy of attention.

Perhaps there is not a circumstance that points more favourably towards these great designs, than commodious roads. According as a country is improved in her roads, so will she stand in the scale of civilization. It is a characteristic by which we may pronounce with safety. The manners and the roads of the English, have been refining together for about 1700 years. If any period of time is distinguished with a more rapid improvement in one, it is also in the other.

Our Saxon ancestors, of dusky memory, seldom stepped from under the smoke of Birmingham. We have a common observation among us, that even so late as William the III., the roads were in so dangerous a state, that a man usually made his will, and took a formal farewell of his friends, before he durst venture upon a journey to London ; which, perhaps, was thought then of as much consequence as a voyage to America is now. A dangerous road is unfavourable both to commerce and to friendship ; a man is unwilling to venture his neck to sell his productions, or even visit his friend ; if a dreadful road lies between them, it will be apt to annihilate friendship.

Landed property in particular, improves with the road.

If a farmer cannot bring his produce to market, he cannot give much for his land, neither can that land well be improved, or the market properly supplied. Upon a well formed road, therefore, might, with propriety, be placed the figures of commerce, of friendship, and of agriculture, as presiding over it.

The Romans were the most accomplished masters we know of in this useful art; yet even they seem to have forgot the under drain, for it is evident at this day, where their road runs along the declivity of a hill, the water dams up, flows over, and injures the road. Care should be taken, in properly forming a road at first, otherwise you may botch it for a whole century, and at the end of that long period, it will be only a botch itself. A wide road will put the innocent traveller out of fear of the waggons; not the most civilized of the human race.

From Birmingham, as from a grand centre, issue twelve roads, that point to as many towns; some of these, within memory, have scarcely been passable; all are mended, but though much is done, more is wanted. In an upland country, like that about Birmingham, where there is no river of size, and where the heads only of the streams show themselves, the stranger would be surprised to hear, that through most of these twelve roads he cannot travel in a flood with safety. For want of causeways and bridges, the water is suffered to flow over the road, higher than the stirrup; every stream, though only the size of a tobacco-pipe, ought to be carried through an under-drain, never to run over the road.

At Saltley, in the way to Coleshill, which is ten miles, for want of a causeway, with an arch or two, every flood annoys the passenger and the road. At Coleshill Hall, till the year 1779, he had to pass a dangerous river.

One mile from Birmingham, upon the Lichfield road,



sixteen miles, to the disgrace of the community, was a river without a bridge till 1792. In 1777, the country was inclined to solicit parliament for a turnpike act, but the matter fell to the ground through private views; one would think that penny can never be ill laid out, which carries a man ten miles with pleasure and safety. The hand of nature has been more beneficent, both to this, and to the Stafford road, which is twenty-eight miles, than that of art.

The road to Walsall, ten miles, is lately made good.

That to Wolverhampton, thirteen miles, is much improved since the coal teams left it.

The road to Dudley, ten miles, is despicable beyond description. The unwilling traveller is obliged to go two miles about, through a bad road, to avoid a worse.

That to Hales Owen, eight miles, like the life of man, is chequered with good and evil; chiefly the latter.

To Bromsgrove, twelve miles, made extremely commodious, under the patronage of John Kettle, Esq.

To Alcester, about twenty, formed in 1767, upon a tolerable plan, but is rather too narrow, through a desolate country, which at present scarcely defrays the expense; but that country seems to improve with the road.

Those to Stratford and Warwick, about twenty miles each, are much used and much neglected.

That to Coventry, about the same distance, can only be equalled by the Dudley road. The genius of the age has forgot, in some of these roads, to accommodate the foot passenger with a causeway.

The surveyor will be inclined to ask, How can a capital be raised to defray this enormous expense? Suffer me to reply with an expression in the life of Oliver Cromwell, "He that lays out money when necessary, and only then, will accomplish matters beyond the reach of imagination." Since Mr. Hutton wrote the above, the whole of the roads out of Birmingham have been improved, and

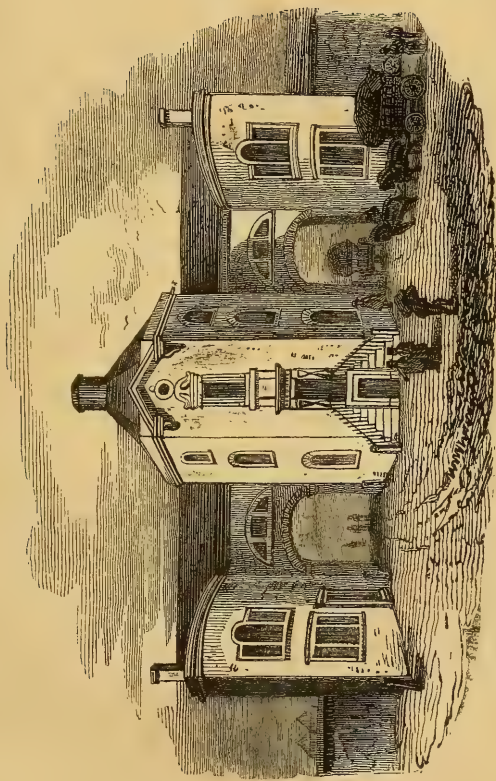
in many instances much shortened. The worst road from Birmingham now, I think, is that leading to the county town of Warwick.

Government long practised the impolitic mode of transporting vast numbers of her people to America, under the character of felons ; these, who are generally in the prime of life, might be made extremely useful to that country which they formerly robbed, and against which they often carry arms. It would be easy to reduce this ferocious race under a kind of martial discipline ; to badge them with a mark only removeable by the governors, for hope should ever be left for repentance, and to employ them in the rougher arts of life, according to the nature of the crime, and the ability of the body ; such as working the coal mines in Northumberland, the lead mines in Derbyshire, the tin mines in Cornwall, cultivating waste lands, banking after inundations, forming canals, cleansing the beds of rivers, assisting in harvest, and in FORMING and MENDING the ROADS : *these hewers of wood and drawers of water* would be a corps of reserve against any emergency. From this magazine of villainy, the British navy might be equipped with considerable advantage.

#### *Canals.*

An act was obtained in 1767, to make a canal between Birmingham and the coal delphs about Wednesbury. The necessary article of coal, before this act, was brought by land, at about thirteen shillings per ton, but now at eight shillings and fourpence. It was common to see a train of carriages for miles, to the great destruction of the road and the annoyance of travellers.

This duct is extended in the whole to about twenty-two miles in length, till it unites with what we may justly term the grand artery, or Staffordshire Canal ; which, crossing the island, communicates with Hull, Bristol, and Liver-



THE CANAL OFFICE.





pool. The expense was about £70,000, divided into shares of £140 each, of which no man can purchase more than ten, and which, in 1782, sold for about £370, and in 1792 for £1170.

The proprietors took a perpetual lease of six acres of land of Sir Thomas Gooch, at £47 per annum, which is converted into a wharf, upon the front of which is erected a handsome office for the dispatch of business.

This watery passage, exclusive of loading the proprietors with wealth, tends greatly to the improvement of some branches of trade, by introducing heavy materials at a small expense, such as pig iron from the founderies, limestone, articles for the manufacture of brass and steel, also stone, brick, slate, timber, &c. It is happy for the world, that public interest is grafted upon private, and that both flourish together.

This grand work, like other productions of Birmingham birth, was rather hasty; the managers, not being able to find patience to worm round the hill at Smethwick, or cut through, it wisely travelled over it by the help of twelve locks, with six they mount the summit, and with six more descend to the former level; forgetting the great waste of water, and the small supply from the rivulets, and also the amazing loss of time in climbing this curious ladder, consisting of twelve liquid steps. These locks are now reduced in number. It is worthy of remark, that the level of the earth is nearly the same at Birmingham as at the pits; what benefit then would accrue to commerce, could the boats travel a dead flat of fourteen miles, without interruption? The use of the canal would increase, great variety of goods be brought which are now excluded, and these delivered with more expedition, with less expense, and the waste of water never felt; but, by the introduction of twelve unnecessary locks, the com-

pany may experience five plagues more than fell on Egypt.

The boats are nearly alike, constructed to fit the locks, carry about twenty-five tons, and are each drawn by something like the skeleton of a horse, covered with skin; whether he subsists upon the scent of the water, is a doubt; but whether his life is a scene of affliction, is not; for the unfeeling driver has no employment but to whip him from one end of the canal to the other. While the teams practised the turnpike road, the lash was divided among five unfortunate animals, but now the whole wrath of the driver falls upon one. We can scarcely view a boat travelling this liquid road, without raising opposite sensations—pleased to think of its great benefit to the community, and grieved to behold wanton punishment. I see a large field of cruelty expanding before me, which I could easily prevail with myself to enter; in which we behold the child plucking a wing and a leg off a fly, to try how the poor insect can perform with half his limbs; or running a pin through the posteriors of a locust, to observe it spinning through the air, like a comet, drawing a tail of thread. If we allow man has a right to destroy noxious animals, we cannot allow he has a right to protract their pain by a lingering death. By fine gradations the modes of cruelty improve with years, in pinching the tail of a cat for the music of her voice, kicking a dog because we have trod upon his foot, or hanging him for *fun*, till we arrive at the priests in the church of Rome, who burnt people for opinion; or to the painter, who begged the life of a criminal, that he might torture him to death with the severest pangs, to catch the agonizing feature, and transfer it into his favourite piece, of a dying Saviour. But did that Saviour teach such doctrine? Humanity would wish rather to have lost the piece, than have heard of the cruelty. What, if the injured ghost of

the criminal is at this moment torturing that of the painter ? But as this capacious field is beyond the line I profess, and as I have no direct accusation against the people of my regard, I shall not enter it.

*Bilston Canal Act.*

Envy, like a dark shadow, follows closely the footsteps of prosperity ; success in any undertaking out of the circle of genius, produces a rival. This I have instanced in our hackney coaches. Profits, like a round-bellied bottle, may seem bulky, which, like that, will not bear dividing. Thus Orator Jones, in 1774, opened a debating society at the Red Lion ; he quickly filled a large room with customers, and his pockets with money, but he had not prudence to keep either. His success opened a rival society at the King's Head, which, in a few weeks, annihilated both.

The growing profits of our canal company already mentioned, had increased the shares from £140 in 1768, to four hundred guineas in 1782. These emoluments being thought enormous, a rival company sprung up, which, in 1783, petitioned parliament to partake of those emoluments, by opening a parallel cut from some of the neighbouring coal-pits, to proceed along the lower level, and terminate in Digbeth.

A stranger might ask, “ How the water in our upland country, which had never supplied one canal, could supply two ? Whether the second canal was not likely to rob the first ? Whether one able canal is not preferable to two lame ones ? If a man sells me an article cheaper than I can purchase it elsewhere, whether, it is of consequence to me what are his profits ? And whether two companies in rivalry would destroy that harmony which has long subsisted in Birmingham ? ”

The new company urged “ the necessity of another canal, lest the old should not perform the business of the town ;

that twenty per cent. are unreasonable returns ; that they could afford coals under the present price ; that the south country teams would procure a readier supply from Digbeth, than from the present wharf, and not passing through the streets, would be prevented from injuring the pavement ; and that the goods from the Trent, would come to their wharf by a run of eighteen miles nearer than to the other."

The old company alleged, " that they ventured their property in an uncertain pursuit, which, had it not succeeded, would have ruined many individuals ; therefore the present gains were only a recompense for former hazard ; that this property was expended upon the faith of parliament, who were obliged in honour to protect it, otherwise no man would risk his fortune upon a public undertaking ; for should they allow a second canal, why not a third ; which would become a wanton destruction of right, without benefit ; that although the profit of the original subscribers might seem large, those subscribers are but few ; many have bought at a subsequent price which barely pays common interest, and this is all their support ; therefore a reduction would be barbarous on one side, and sensibly felt on the other ; and, as the present canal amply supplies the town and country, it would be ridiculous to cut away good land to make another, which would ruin both."

I shall not examine the reasons of either, but leave the disinterested reader to weigh both in his own balance. When two opponents have said all that is true, they generally say something more ; rancour holds the place of argument.

Both parties beat up for volunteers in the town, to strengthen their forces ; from words of acrimony they came to those of virulence ; then the powerful batteries of handbills and newspapers were opened ; every town within



fifty miles, interested on either side, was moved to petition, and both prepared for a grand attack, confident of victory. Perhaps a contest among friends, in matters of property, will remove that peace of mind which twenty per cent. will not replace. Each party possessed that activity of spirit for which Birmingham is famous, and seemed to divide between them the legislative strength of the nation ; every corner of the two houses was ransacked for a vote ; the throne was the only power unsolicited. Perhaps at the reading, when both parties had marshalled their forces, there was the fullest House of Commons ever remembered on a private bill.

The new company promised much, for besides the cut from Wednesbury to Digbeth, they would open another to join the two canals of Stafford and Coventry, in which a large tract of country was interested.

As the old company were the first adventurers, the house gave them the option to perform this Herculean labour, which they accepted. Thus the new proprietors, by losing, will save £50,000 and the old, by winning, become sufferers.

Since the above, acts have been obtained to open canals from the town to Worcester, Fazeley, Warwick, and Stratford.

#### *Gentlemen's Seats.*

This neighbourhood may justly be deemed the seat of the arts, but not the seat of the gentry. None of the nobility are near us, except William Legge, Earl of Dartmouth, at Sandwell, four miles from Birmingham. The principal houses in our environs, are those of the late Sir Charles Holte, who was member for the county, at Aston ; Sir Henry Gough Calthorpe, member for Bramber, at Edgbaston ; George Birch, Esq. at Handsworth ; John Gough, Esq. at Perry ; and John Taylor, Esq. at Bordes-

ley, and at Moseley ; all joining to the manor of Birmingham. Exclusive of these, are many elegant retreats of our first inhabitants, acquired by commercial success.

Full fed with vanity is an author, when two readers strive to catch up his work, for the pleasure of perusing it :—but, perchance, if two readers dip into this chapter, they may strive to lay it down.

I have hitherto written to the *world*, but now to a small part, *the antiquarians* ; nay, a small part of the sensible part ; for a fool and an antiquarian is a contradiction ; they are, to a man, people of letters and penetration. If their judgment is sometimes erroneous, we may consider, man was never designed for perfection ; there is also less light to guide them in this, than in other researches. If the traveller slips upon common ground, how will he fare if he treads upon ice ?—Besides, in dark questions, as in intricate journies, there are many erroneous ways for one that is right. If, like the mathematician, he can establish one point, it ascertains another. We may deem his pursuit one of the most arduous, and attended with the least profit ; his emoluments consist in the returns of pleasure to his own mind. The historian only collects the matter of the day and hands it to posterity ; but the antiquarian brings his treasures from remote ages, and presents them to this ; he examines forgotten repositories, calls things back into existence ; counteracts the efforts of time, and of death ; possesses something like a recreative power ; collects the dust of departed matter, moulds it into its pristine state, exhibits the figure to view, and stamps it with a kind of immortality.

Every thing has its day, whether it be a nation, a city, a castle, a man, or an insect ; the difference is, one is a winter's day, the other may be extended to the length of a summer's—an *end* waits upon all. But we cannot contemplate the end of grandeur without gloomy ideas.

Birmingham is surrounded with the melancholy remains of extinguished greatness: the decayed habitations of decayed gentry, fill the mind with sorrowful reflections. Here the feet of those marked the ground, whose actions marked the page of history. Their arms glistened in the field; their eloquence moved the senate. Born to command, their influence was extensive; but who now rest in peace among the paupers, fed with crumbs of their table. The very land which, for ages, was witness to the hospitality of its master, is itself doomed to sterility. The spot which drew the adjacent country, is neglected by all; is often in a wretched state of cultivation, sets for a trifle; the glory is departed; it demands a tear from the traveller, and the winds seem to sigh over it.

#### *The Moats.*

In the parish of King's Norton, four miles south-west of Birmingham, is *the Moats*, upon which long resided the ancient family of Field. The numerous buildings, which almost formed a village, are totally erased, and barley grows where the beer was drank.

#### *Black Greves.*

Eight miles south west of Birmingham, in the same parish, near Withod Chapel, is *Black Greves* (Black Groves) another seat of the Fields; which, though a family of opulence, were so far from being lords of the manor, that they were in vassalage to them.

The whole of that extensive parish is in the crown, which holds the detestable badge of ancient slavery over every tenant, of demanding under the name of herriot, the best moveable he dies possessed of—Thus death and the bailiff make their inroads together; they rob the family in a double capacity, each taking the best moveable.

As the human body descends into the regions of sickness, much sooner than it can return into health ; so a family can decline into poverty by hastier steps than rise into affluence. One generation of extravagance puts a period to many of greatness. A branch of the Fields, in 1777, finished their ancient grandeur by signing away the last estate of his family.—Thus he blotted out the name of his ancestors by writing his own.

*Ulverley, or Culverley.*

Four miles from Birmingham, upon the Warwick Road, entering the parish of Solihull, in Castle Lane, is Ulverley, in doomsday Ulverlei. Trifling as this place now seems, it must have been the manor-house of Solihull, under the Saxon heptarchy ; but went to decay so long ago as the conquest.

The manor was the property of the Earls of Mercia, but whether their residence is uncertain. The traces of a moat yet remain, which are triangular, and encircle a wretched farm house of no note ; one of the angles of this moat is filled up, and become part of Castle Lane, which proves that Ulverley went into disuse when Hogg's Moat was erected ; it also proves that the lane terminated here, which is about two hundred yards from the turnpike road. The great width of the lane, from the road to Ulverley, and the singular narrowness from thence to Hogg's moat, is another proof of its prior antiquity.

If we pursue our journey half a mile farther along this lane, which by the way is scarcely passable, it will bring us to

*Hogg's Moat.*

At Oltenend (Old Town) originally Odingsell's Moat, now Hobb's Moat, the ancient manor house of Solihull, after it had changed its lords at the conquest. The pro-



perty, as before observed, of Edwin Earl of Mercia, in the reign of Edward the Confessor.

William the I. granted the manor to a favourite lady, named Cristina, probably a handsome lass, of the same complexion as his mother; thus we err when we say William gave all the land in the kingdom to his followers—some little was given to those he followed.

This lady, like many of her successors, having tired the arms of royalty, was conveyed into those of an humble favourite; Ralph de Limesie married her, who became lord of the place, but despising Ulverley, erected this castle. The line of Limesie continued proprietors four descents; when, in the reign of King John, it became the property of Hugh de Odingsells, by marrying a co-heiress. The last of the Odingsell's in 1294, left four daughters, one of whom, with the lordship, fell into the hands of John de Clinton; but it is probable the castle was not inhabited after the above date, therefore would quickly fall to decay.

The Moat is upon a much larger plan than Ulverley, takes in a compass of five acres, had two trenches; the outer is nearly obliterated, but the inner is marked with the strongest lines we meet with. This trench is about twenty feet deep, and about thirty yards from the crown of one bank to the other. When Dugdale saw it about a hundred and sixty years ago, the centre, which is about two acres, where the castle stood, was covered with old oaks; round this centre are now some thousands the oldest of which is not more than a century; so that the timber is changed since the days of Dugdale, but not the appearance of the land. The centre is bare of timber, and exhibits the marks of the plough. The late Benjamin Palmer, Esq. a few years ago, planted it with trees, which are in that dwindling state, that they are not likely to grow so tall as their master.\*

\* He measured about six feet five inches, but was singularly short in the

A place of such desolation, one would think, was a place of silence—just the reverse. When I saw it, Feb. 1783, the trees were tall, the winds high, and the roar tremendous.

Exclusive of Ulverley and Hogg's Moat, there are many old foundations in Solihull, once the residence of gentry now extinct; as Solihull Hall, the Moat House, and Kynton, the property of the Botolers; Bury Hall, that of the Warings; who both came over with William; Henwood, belonging to the Hugfords; Hillfield Hall, the ancient seat of the Greswolds, as Malvern was their modern.

### *Yardley.*

At Yardley Church, four miles east of Birmingham, is *The Moat*, now a pasture; the trench still retains, its water, as a remembrance of its former use. This was anciently the property of the Allestrees, lords of Witton; but about forty years ago, the building and the family expired together.

### *Kent's Moat.*

One mile farther east is Kent's Moat, in which no noise is heard but the singing of birds, as if for joy that their enemy is fled, and they have regained their former habitation.

This is situate on an eminence, like that of Park Hall, is capacious, has but one trench, supplied by its own

lower parts: his step was not larger than a child's of ten years old. His carriage, by its extraordinary height, looked at a distance like a moving steeple: he sat as high in a common chair, as a man of the middle size stands; he was as immoderately heavy as he was tall, and as remarkable for good nature as either. As a man he shone by his bulk; as a magistrate, in a dull but honest light—his decisions were *intended* to be just. He seemingly dozed as he walked; but if his own eyes were half shut, those of every other person were open to see him.

springs ; and, like that, as complete as earth and water can make it.

This was part of Coleshill, and vested in the crown before the conquest, but soon after granted with that to Clinton, who gave it with a daughter to Verdon ; and he, with another, to Anselm de Scheldon, who kept it till the reign of Edward the III. ; it afterwards passed through several families, till the reign of Henry the VII., when it came into that of De Gray, Earl of Kent, whence the name ; though, perhaps, the works were erected by Scheldon.

It is now, with Coleshill, the property of Lord Digby ; but the building has been so long gone, that tradition herself has lost it.

#### *Sheldon.*

One mile east is Sheldon Hall, which anciently bore the name of East Hall, in *contradiction* from Kent's Moat, which was West Hall. This, in 1379, was the property of Sir Hugh le Despenser, afterwards of the family of Devereux, ancestor of the present Viscount Hereford, who resided here till about 1710. In 1751, it was purchased by John Taylor, Esq. and is now possessed by his tenant.

The Moat, like others on an eminence, has but one trench, fed by the land springs ; is filled up in the front of the hall, as there is not much need of water protection. The house, which gives an idea of former gentility, seems the first erected on the spot ; is irregular, agreeable to the taste of the times, and must have been built many centuries. All the ancient furniture fled with its owners, except an hatchment in the hall, with sixteen coats of arms, specifying the families into which they married.

#### *King's Hurst.*

Two furlongs east of Sheldon Hall, and one mile south

of Castle Bromwich, is *King's Hurst* ; which, though now a dwelling in tenancy, was once the capital of a large tract of land, consisting of its own manor, Coleshill, and Sheldon ; the demesne of the crown, under Saxon kings, from whom we trace the name.

The Conqueror, or his son William, granted it to Mountfort, but whether for money, service, caprice, or favour, is uncertain ; for he who wears a crown acts as whimsically as he who does not.

Mountfort came over with William, as a knight, and an officer of rank ; but perhaps, did not immediately receive the grant, for the King would act again much like other people, *give away their property, before he would give away his own.*

If this unfortunate family were not the first grantees, they were lords, and probably residents of King's Hurst, long before their possession of Coleshill in 1332, and by a younger branch, long after the unhappy attainder of Sir Simon in 1497.

Sir William Mountfort, in 1390, augmented the buildings, erected a chapel, and inclosed the manor. His grandson, Sir Edmund, in 1447, paled in some of the land, and dignified it with the fashionable name of *park*.

This prevailing humour of imparking was unknown to the Saxons, it crept in with the Norman ; some of the first we meet with are those of Nottingham, Wedgnock, and Woodstock—Nottingham, by William Peveral, illegitimate son of the Conqueror ; Wedgnock, by Newburg, the first Norman Earl of Warwick ; and Woodstock, by Henry the I. So that the Duke of Marlborough perhaps may congratulate himself with possessing the oldest park in use.

The modern park is worth attention ; some are delightful in the extreme ; they are the beauties of creation,



terrestrial paradises ; they are nature cautiously assisted by invisible art. We envy the little being who presides over one—but why should we envy him ? the pleasure consists in *seeing*, and one man may *see* as well as another ; nay, the stranger holds a privilege beyond him ; for the proprietor, by often seeing, loses the beauties, while he who looks but seldom, sees with full effect. Besides one is liable to be fretted by the mischievous hand of injury, which the stranger seldom sees ; he looks for excellence, the owner for defect, and they both find.

These proud inclosures guarded by the growth within, first appeared under the dimension of one or two hundred acres ; but fashion, emulation, and the park, grew up together, till the last swelled, into one or two thousand.

If religions rise from the lowest ranks, the fashions generally descend from the higher, who are at once blamed and imitated by their inferiors. The highest orders of men lead up a fashion, the next class tread upon their heels, the third quickly follow, then the fourth, fifth, &c. immediately figure after them. But as a man who had an inclination for a park, could not always spare a thousand acres, he must submit to less, for a park must be had ; thus Bond, of Ward End, set up with thirty ; some with one half, till the very word became a burlesque upon the idea. The design was a display of lawns, hills, water, clumps, &c. as if ordered by the voice of nature ; and furnished with herds of deer. But some of our modern parks contain none of these beauties, nor scarcely land enough to support a rabbit.

I am possessed of one of these jokes of a park, something less than an acre ;—he that has none might think it a *good* joke, and wish it his own ; he that has more would despise it ; that it never was larger, appears from its being surrounded by Sutton Coldfield ; and that it has re-

tained the name for ages, appears from the old timber upon it.

The manor of King's Hurst was disposed of by the Mountforts about two hundred years ago, to the Digbys, where it remains.

### *Coleshill.*

One mile farther east is *Coleshill Hall*, vested in the crown before and after the conquest; purchased, perhaps, of William Rufus, by Geoffrey de Clinton, ancestor to the present Duke of Newcastle. In 1352, an heiress of the house of Clinton gave it, with herself, to Sir John de Mountfort, of the same family with Simon, the great Earl of Leicester, who fell, in 1265, at Evesham, in that remarkable contest with Henry the III.

With them it continued till 1497, when Sir Simon Mountfort, charged, but perhaps unjustly, with assisting Perkin Warbeck with £30, was brought to trial at Guildhall, condemned as a traitor, executed at Tyburn, his large fortune confiscated, and his family ruined. Some of his descendants I well know in Birmingham; and *they* are well known to poverty, and the vice.

In the reign of Henry the VII., it was almost dangerous, particularly for a rich man, even to *think* against a crafty and avaricious monarch. What is singular, the man who accused Sir Simon at the bar, succeeded him in his estate.

Simon Digby procured a grant of the place, in whose line it still continues. The hall is inhabited, but has been left about forty years by the family; was probably erected by the Mountforts, is extensive, and its antique aspect without, gives a venerable pleasure to the beholder, like the half admitted light diffused within. Every spot of the park is delightful, except that in which the hall stands;

our ancestors built in the vallies, for the sake of water; their successors on the hills, for the sake of air.

From this uncouth swamp sprung the philosopher, the statesman, and tradition says, the gunpowder plot.

*Duddeston.*

Four furlongs north east of Birmingham is *Duddeston* (Dud's Town) from Dud, the Saxon proprietor, Lord of Dudley, who probably had a seat here; once a considerable village, but long reduced to the manor-house, till Birmingham, swelling beyond its bounds, in 1764 verged upon this lordship; and in 1783, we beheld about eighty houses, under the names of Duke Street, Prospect Row, and Woodcock Lane. From which time, to the present day, May 20, 1793, is the following increase: Belle Mount (Watery Lane), twenty-six houses; St. George's Street, five; Lawley Street, seventy-three; Windsor Street, sixty-three; Henry Street, seven; Great Brook Street, forty-five; Vauxhall Row (the turnpike road) ninety-two; exclusive of a Methodist Meeting House, Barracks for the Military, and Ashsted Chapel, for episcopal worship.

It afterwards descended to the Paganalls, the Sumeris, then to the Bottetourts, and was, in 1323, enjoyed by Joan Bottetourt, lady of Weoley Castle, a daughter of the house of Sumeri.

Sir Thomas de Erdington held it of this lady, by a chief rent, which was a pair of gilt spurs, or sixpence, at the option of the tenant.

Erdington sold it, in 1327, to Thomas de Maidenache, by whose daughter, Sibell, it came in marriage to Adam de Grymsorwe, whose posterity, in 1363, conveyed it for £26 13s. 4d. now worth £20,000 to John atte Holt; and his successors made it their residence till the erection of Aston Hall, in the reign of James I.

It is now converted into beautiful gardens, as a public resort of pleasure, and dignified with the London name of Vauxhall. The demolished fish-ponds, and the old foundations, which repel the spade, declare its former grandeur.

In 1782 it quitted, by one of the most unaccountable assignments that ever resulted from human weakness, the ancient name of Holt, familiar during four hundred and nineteen years, for that of Legge.

Could the ghost of Sir Lister re-visit his departed property, one might ask, What reception might you meet with, Sir Lister, in 1770, among your venerable ancestors in the shades, for barring, unprovoked, an infant heiress of £7000 a year, and giving it, unsolicited, to a stranger? Perhaps you experience repeated buffetings; a sturdy figure, with iron aspect, would be apt to accost you—"I with nervous arm, and many a bended back, drew £40 from the Birmingham forge, with which, in 1330, I purchased the park and manor of Nechels, now worth four hundred times that sum. I planted that family which you have plucked up by the roots; in the sweat of my brow, I laid a foundation for greatness; many of my successors built on that foundation—but you, by starving your brother, Sir Charles, into compliance, wantonly cut off the entail, and gave away the estate, after passing through seventeen descents, merely to show you had a power to give it. We concluded here, that a son of his daughter, the last hope of the family, would change his own name to preserve ours, and not the estate change its possessor."—"I (another would be apt to say), with frugal hand, and lucrative employments under the crown, added, in 1363, the manor of Duddeston; and, in 1367, that of Aston. But for what purpose did I add them? To display the folly of a successor."—A dejected spectre would seem to step forward, whose face carried the wrinkles of eighty-



four, and the shadow of a tear ; “ I, in 1611, brought the title of baronet among us, first tarnished by you ; which, if your own imbecility could not procure issue to support, you ought to have supported it by purchase. I also, in 1620, erected the mansion at Aston, then, and even now, the most superb in that neighbourhood, fit to grace the leading title of nobility ; but you forbade my successors to enter. I joined, in 1647, to our vast fortune, the manor of Erdington. Thus the fabric we have been rearing for ages, you overthrew in one fatal moment.”—The last angry spectre would appear in the bloom of life. “ I left you an estate which you did not deserve ; you had no more right to leave it from your successor, than I to leave it from you ; one man may ruin the family of another, but he seldom ruins his own. We blame him who wrongs his neighbour, but what does he deserve who wrongs himself ? You have done both, for by cutting off the succession, your name will be lost. The ungenerous attorney, instead of making your absurd will, ought to have apprized you of our sentiments, which exactly coincide with those of the world, or how could the tale affect a stranger ? Why did not some generous friend guide your crazy vessel, and save a sinking family ? Degenerate son, he who destroys the peace of another, should forfeit his own—we leave you to remorse, may she quickly *find, and weep over you.*”

This ancient family, that sprang from the anvil, sported upon an estate worth £12,000 a year, is now sunk into its pristine obscurity. Its head, Edward Holt (perhaps Sir Edward) thumped at the anvil many years for bread, in the fabrication of spades. A most amiable man of his race, and the only baronet that ever shaped a shovel.

The descendant of the above named Edward Holte, does or did lately dance at the lathe, a few hundred yards from the boundaries of the estates of his ancestors, now in

the possession of a variety of proprietors, having been sold in lots in the year 1818. The park was about this time dismantled of most of its stately trees. The antique furniture of the hall sold by auction, and the land in the park let for tillage or pasture to various tenants.

The hall is now occupied by James Watt, Esq., son of the celebrated James Watt, improver of the steam engine. Mr. Watt served the office of sheriff for the county of Warwick, in the year 1829. The hall may be seen from the Lichfield road, through an avenue of stately elms, about half a mile in length. The hall and the avenue have much the same appearance as formerly, although some of the trees have been felled.

#### *Aston Church.*

The parish church of Aston, which is dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul, is situated about two miles from the centre of Birmingham, close to the park, and very near the hall. It is ornamented with a tall spire, and contains many ancient monuments of the *Holts*, the *Ardens*, and the *Devereux*. The windows are of painted glass, by Egington, one of which represents the resurrection of the lady to whose memory it is erected. The vicarage house stands a short distance from the church, a large mansion erected a few years ago. The present vicar is the Rev. George Owsley Fenwicke, M. A., who is a surrogate for granting marriage licenses. Sir Thomas Holte, who died in 1654, left by will sufficient to build the almshouses, situated near the church, and £84 annually from his manor of Erdington for their support. The aboye Sir Thomas Holte formed the *park*, and built the present *hall*, which was commenced in 1618, and finished, 1636. He was favourable to the royal cause during the rebellion, and entertained Charles the I., for two days, about the 17th of October, 1642, when on his march to meet the





EDGCHASTON CHURCH.





ASTON CHURCH.



parliament forces. The rebels, as was before stated, plundered the king of his plate, and fired at and plundered the hall of Sir Thomas, for his hospitality to the monarch. The effects of the cannon shot are still visible on the fractured balustrades of the great staircase, and until the furniture was sold in 1818, the state bed, in which King Charles slept, was shown to visitors.

*Edgbaston.*

The parish of Edgbaston joins the parish of Birmingham on the west and south-west, and is bounded on the other sides by Harbourn and King's Norton. Edgbaston was possessed by Henry de Edgbaston, in the reign of Henry the II., and afterwards by the family of Middlemore, till the year 1717, when Sir Richard Gough, ancestor of Lord Calthorpe, the present possessor, purchased the lordship and nearly the whole of the parish of Edgbaston, for £25,000. The Manor House was garrisoned by the parliament army, at the civil wars of Charles the I., and the church was destroyed to prevent it being occupied by the king's forces. The Hall was afterwards destroyed by the populace, to prevent it becoming a refuge for papists, previous to the landing of the Prince of Orange, in 1688, and remained in ruins till purchased by Sir Richard Gough. It stands in a small but beautifully situated park, in which is a large sheet of water, and a considerable quantity of timber. The house was plundered in 1791, and would have been burnt, but for the arrival of the military, in town, which scared the mob from their object. It was then occupied by Dr. Withering, but now, and for many years past, by Dr. Edward Johnstone. Edgbaston has become of late years a favourite place of retreat to those who have basked in the sunshine of commercial prosperity. The salubrity of the air and the dryness of the soil, the exclusion of manufactures and small houses

renders it a pleasant residence for persons of wealth. Should this estate remain undivided for a century, it will, probably, become the richest in this part of the kingdom. The Worcester Canal, and the roads to Bromsgrove, Hales Owen, Hagley, Stourbridge, and Harbourn, pass through this parish. The church, soon after the restoration was rebuilt, repaired in 1717, and again almost entirely rebuilt in 1810; the tower, and a part of the east end, are all that remain of the old building. The ancient monuments are all destroyed.

The church stands upon an elevated spot, near the park, in an enclosed cemetery. Minister, the Rev. Charles Pixell.

### *Saltley.*

A mile east of Duddeston is *Saltley Hall*, which, with an extensive tract of ground, was, in the Saxon times, the freehold of a person whom we should now call Allen; the same who was Lord of Birmingham. But at the conquest, when justice was laid asleep, and property possessed by him who could seize it, this manor, with many others, fell into the hands of William Fitz-Auscult, Baron of Dudley Castle, who granted it in knight's service to Henry de Rokeby.

A daughter of Rokeby carried it by marriage to Sir John Goband, whose descendants, in 1332, sold it to Walter de Clodshale; an heiress of Clodshale, in 1426, brought it into the ancient family of Arden, and a daughter of this house to that of Adderley, where it now rests.

The castle, I have reason to think, was erected by Rokeby, in which all the lords resided till the extinction of the Clodshales. It has been gone to ruin about three hundred years, and the solitary platform seems to mourn its loss



*Ward End*

Three miles from Birmingham, in the same direction, is *Ward End*, anciently *Little Bromwich*; a name derived from the plenty of broom, and is retained to this day by part of the precincts, *Broomford* (Bromford)

This manor was claimed by that favourite of the Conqueror, Fitz-Ausculf, and granted by him to a second-hand favourite, who took its name.

The old castle has been gone about a century; the works are nearly complete, cover about nine acres, the most capacious in this neighbourhood, those of Woley Castle excepted. The central area is now an orchard, and the water, which guarded the castle, guards the fruit. This is surrounded with three mounds, and three trenches, one of them fifty yards over, which, having lost its master, guards the fish.

The place afterwards passed through several families, till the reign of Henry the VII. One of them bearing the name of *Ward*, changed the name to *Ward End*.

In 1512, it was the property of John Bond, who, fond of his little hamlet, inclosed a park of thirty acres, stocked it with deer; and, in 1517, erected a chapel for the conveniency of his tenants, being two miles from the parish church of Aston. The skeleton of this chapel, in the form of a cross, the fashion of the times, is yet standing on the outward mound; its floor is the only religious one I have seen laid with horse-dung; the pulpit is converted into a manger—it formerly furnished husks for the man, but now corn for the horse. Like the first christian church, it has experienced a double use, a church and a stable; but with this difference, *that* in Bethlehem was a stable advanced into a church; this, on the contrary, is reduced into a stable. This chapel has lately been restored by private subscription.

The manor, by a female, passed through the Kinardsleys, and is now possessed by the Brandwoods ; but the hall, erected in 1710, and its environs, are the property of Isaac Spooner, Esq.

*Castle Bromwich.*

Simply *Bromwich*, because the soil is productive of broom.

My subject often leads me back to the conquest, an enterprize, wild without parallel ; we are astonished at the undertaking, because William was certainly a man of sense, and a politician. Harold, his competitor, was a prince much superior in power, a consummate general, and beloved by his people. The odds were so much against the invader, that out of one hundred such imprudent attempts, ninety-nine would miscarry ; all the excuse in his favour is, *it succeeded*. Many causes concurred in this success, such as his own ambition, aided by his valour ; the desperate fortune of his followers, very few of whom were men of property, for to the appearance of gentlemen, they added the realities of want ; a situation to which any change is thought preferable ; but, above all, *chance*. A man may dispute for religion, he may contend for liberty, he may run for his life, but he will *fight* for property.

By the contest between William and Harold, the unhappy English lost all they had to lose ; and though this all centered in the Normans, they did not acquire sufficient to content them.

History does not inform us who was then the proprietor of Castle Bromwich, but that it belouged to the Mercian Earls scarcely admits a doubt ; as Edwin owned some adjoining manors, he probably owned this. Fitz-Ausculf was his fortunate successor, who procured many lordships in the neighbourhood of Birmingham ; Castle Bromwich

was one. He granted it to an inferior Norman, in military tenure, who, agreeable to the fashion of those times, took the surname of Bromwich.

Henry de Castel was a subsequent proprietor. Dugdale supposes the village took its name from a castle, once on the premises, and that the castle hill yet remains; but this hill is too small, even to admit a shelter for a Lilliputian, and is evidently an artificial trifle, designed for a monument. It might hold, for its ancient furniture, a turret, termed a castle—perhaps it held nothing in Dugdale's time; the modern is a gladiator, in the attitude of fighting, supported by a pedestal, containing the Bridgeman's arms.

*Castle*, probably, was added by the family of that name, lords of the place, to distinguish it from *woody*, and *little* Bromwich. They bore for their arms, three castles and a chevron.

Lord Ferrers, of Chartley, who was proprietor of Birmingham in the reign of Henry the VI., enjoyed it by marriage; and his grand-daughter brought it, by the same channel, into the family of Devereux, Lords of Sheldon. Edward, about the latter end of Queen Elizabeth's reign, erected the present building, which is capacious, is in a style between ancient and modern, and has a pleasing appearance.

The Bridgeman family acceded to possession about 1712, by purchase, and made it their residence till about 1768. We should naturally inquire, Why Sir Harry quitted a place so delightfully situated? Perhaps it is not excelled in this country, in the junction of three great roads, a desirable neighbourhood, the river Tame at its back, and within five miles of the plentiful market of Birmingham—but, alas, *it has no park*.

The gentry seem to have resided in our vicinity, when

there was the greatest inducement to leave it, *impassable roads*; they seem also to have quitted the country, now there is the greatest inducement to reside there; roads, which improve their estates, and may be travelled with pleasure. It may be objected, that “the buildings become ancient.” But there is no more disgrace in an old house, than in an old man; they may both be dressed in character, and look well. A gentleman, by residing in the family seat, pays a compliment to his ancestors.

### *Park Hall.*

Six miles north east of Birmingham, and one from Castle Bromwich chapel, is a spacious moat, with one trench, which, for many centuries, guarded *Park Hall*. This is another of those desolate islands, from which every creature is fled, and every sound, except that of the winds; nay, even the very clouds seem to lament the desolation with tears.

This was possessed by none but the Ardens, being part of their vast estate long before the conquest, and five hundred years after. A delightful situation on the banks of the Tame; to which we are led through a dirty road.

We may consider this island the treasury into which forty-six lordships paid their tribute. The riches of the country were drawn to this centre, and commands were issued from it. The growth of these manors supplied that spot, which now grows for another. The lordships are in forty-six hands; the country is in silence; the island ploughed up, and the family distressed—At the remembrance of their name, the smile quits the face of history; she records their sad tale with a sigh; while their arms are yet displayed in some of the old halls in the neighbourhood.



*Berwood*

Crossing the river one mile farther east, is *Berwood Hall*, where the forsaken moat, at this day, guards nothing. This, with the manor to which it belongs, was also the property of the Ardens; one of which, in the reign of Henry the II., granted it to the canons of Leicester; who added a chapel, which went to decay four hundred years ago. After the grant, the Ardens seem to have become tenants to the canons for the land, once their own; we frequently observe a man pay rent for what he *sells*, but seldom for what he *gives*.

At the dissolution of abbies in 1537, Thomas Arden, the head of the family, purchased it of Henry the VIII., for £272 10s. uniting it again to his estate, after a separation of three hundred and fifty years, in whose posterity it continued till their fall. Thus, the father first purchased what the son gave away, and his offspring re-purchased again. The father lays a tax on his successor; or climbs to heaven at the expense of the son. In one age it is meritorious to *give* to the church, in another to *take* from her.

*Erdington.*

Three miles north east of Birmingham, is *Erdington Hall*, which boasts a long antiquity. The manor was the property of the old Earls of Mercia; Edwin possessed it at the conquest, but lost it in favour of William Fitz-Auscult, who, no doubt, granted it in knight's service to his friend and relation, of Norman race; he erected the hall and the moat; took his residence in, and his name Erdington, from the place. His descendants seem to have resided here with great opulence near four hundred years.

Dugdale mentions a circumstance of Sir Thomas de

Erdington, little noticed by our historians. He was a faithful adherent to King John, who conferred on him many valuable favours; harrassed by the Pope on one side, and his angry barons on the other, he privately sent Sir Thomas to Murneli, the powerful King of Africa, Morocco, and Spain, with offers to forsake the Christian faith, turn Mahometan, deliver up his kingdom, and hold it of him in tribute, for his assistance against his enemies. But it does not appear the ambassador succeeded; the Moorish monarch did not choose to unite his prosperous fortune with that of a random prince; he might also consider, the man who could destroy his nephew and his sovereign, could not be an honour to any profession.

The manor left the Erdington family in 1472, and, during a course of one hundred and seventy-five years, acknowledged for its owners, George Plantagenet, Duke of Clarence, Sir William Harcourt, Robert Wright, Sir Reginald Bray, Francis Englefield, Humphry Dimock, Walter Earl, Sir Walter Devereux, and was, in 1647, purchased by Sir Thomas Holte, in whose family it continued till 1782, when Heneage Legge, Esq., became seized of the manor.

As none of the Lords seem to have resided upon the premises since the departure of the Erdingtons, it must be expected they have gradually tended to decay.

We may with some reason conclude, that as Erdington was the freehold of the Earls of Mercia, it was not the residence of its owners, therefore could not derive its name from them. That as the word *Arden* signifies a wood, the etymology of that populous village is, *a town in the wood*. That one of the first proprietors, after the conquest, struck with the security offered by the river, erected the present fortifications, which cover three parts of the hall, and the river itself the fourth. Hence it follows, that the neighbouring work, which we now call Bromford-

forge, was a mill prior to the conquest, because the stream is evidently turned out of its bed to feed it; that the present hall is the second on the premises, and was erected by the Erdingtons, with some later additions.

### *Pipe.*

One mile north east of Erdington, is *Pipe Hall*, which, with its manor, like the neighbouring land, became, at the conquest, the property of Fitz-Auscult, and afterwards of his descendants, Paganall, Sumeri, Bottetort, and St. Leger.

It was common at that fatal period, for one of these great barons, or rather great robbers, to procure a large quantity of land for himself; some of them two or three hundred thousand acres—too much for one man to grasp. He therefore kept what he pleased for his private use, and granted the other in knight's service, reserving annually a rent. These rents were generally small, so as never to hurt the tenant; however, the lord could order him to arms whenever he pleased.

A few of the grants were procured by the disinherited English, but chiefly by the officers of William's army, being more respected, and more proper to be trusted; they were often relations, or favourites of the great barons. The lord could not conveniently sell without the consent of the crown, but he could set at what price he pleased. Time made this chief-rent permanent, and gave the tenant stability of title.

The manor of Pipe, with some others, was granted to William Mansell, who resided in the hall, and executed some of the chief offices of the county.

The last of the name, in the reign of Henry the III., left a daughter, who married Henry de Harcourt; and his daughter married John de Pipe, who seems to have taken its name.

Henry, his descendant, had many children, all of whom, with his lady, died of the plague, except a daughter, Margery. He afterwards married, in 1363, Matilda, the daughter of George de Castell, of Castle Bromwich; but soon after the happy wedding, he perceived his bride was pregnant, which proved, on inquiry, the effect of an intrigue with her father's menial servant; a striking instance of female treachery, which can only be equalled by—male.

The shock proving too great for his constitution, brought on a decline, and himself to the grave, before the birth of the child.

John was the fruit of this unlawful amour, whose guardian, to prevent his inheriting the estate, made him a canon of Ouston, in Leicestershire; and afterwards persuaded the unhappy Margery to grant the manor to the Abbot of Stonely.

Thomas de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, afterwards purchased it for £133 6s. 8d. It came to the crown by attainder, in the reign of Henry the VII.; then to Sir William Staunford, one of his judges, John Buttler, Edward Holte in 1568, Francis Dimock, whose daughter married Walter Earl; then to Walter Devereux, by marrying Earl's daughter; afterwards to Sir Thomas Holte, by purchase; and is now in the family of Bagot.

Though the hall is antique, its front is covered in the modern barbarous style, by a clump of venerable trees; which would become any situation but that in which they stand. It is now inhabited by a gentleman of Birmingham, who has experienced the smiles of commerce.

#### *Aston.*

Two miles north of Birmingham, is Aston (East Town), being east of Westbury (Wednesbury), it lies on a steep descent towards the river Tame.





ASTON HALL.



This place, like that of Edrington, belonged to the Earls of Mercia in the Saxon times ; and, at the conquest was the property of the unfortunate Edwin. Fitz-Ausculf became his successor in this, and other lands ; the survey calls it eight hides, valued at £5 per annum ; a mill, three shillings, and a wood three miles long, and half a mile broad. The mill, I make no doubt, stood where a mill now stands, near Sawford Bridge ; but neither the hides, nor the wood, could be confined within the boundary of Aston ; the manor is too little for either. The lordship extends about a square mile, and that part which is now the park, I have reason to think, was then a common, and for ages after.

A Saxon, of the name of Godmund, held it under the Mercian Earls, and found means, at the conquest, to hold it under the Norman.

One hundred yards north of the church, in a perfect swamp, stood the hall ; probably erected by Godmund, or his family ; the situation shews the extreme of bad taste—one would think, he endeavoured to lay his house under the water. The trenches are obliterated by the floods, so as to render the place unobserved by the stranger ; it is difficult to choose a worse, except he had put his house under the earth. I believe there never was more than one house erected upon the spot, and that was one too much.

Whether this Saxon family of Godmund became extinct, or had lost their right, is uncertain ; but Sumeri, Fitz-Ausculf's successor, about 1203, granted the manor to Sir Thomas de Erdington, Ambassador to King John, mentioned before, who had married his sister ; paying annually a pair of spurs, or sixpence, as a nominal rent, but meant, in reality, as a portion for the lady.

The family of Erdington, about 1275, sold it to Thomas de Maidenhache, who did not seem to live upon friendly

terms with his neighbour, William de Birmingham ; for, in 1290, he brought an action against him for fishing in his water, called Moysich (Dead Branch) leading into Tame, towards Scarford Bridge (Shareford, dividing the shares, or parts of the parish, Aston Manor from Edrington, now Sawford Bridge) which implies a degree of unkindness ; because William could not amuse himself in his own manor of Birmingham, for he might as well have angled in one of his streets, as in the river Rea. The two lords had, probably, four years before been on friendly terms, when they jointly lent their assistance to the hospital of St. Thomas, in Birmingham.

Maidenhache left four daughters ; Sibel married Adam de Grymsorwe, who took with her the manor of Aston ; a daughter of this house, in 1367, sold it to John atte Holte, of Birmingham, in whose family it continued four hundred and fifteen years, till 1782, when Heneage Legge, Esq. acceded to possession.

This wretched bog was the habitation of all the lords, from Godmund to the Holtes, the Erdingtons excepted ; for Maud Grymsorwe executing the conveyance at Aston, indicates that she resided there ; and Thomas Holte, being possessed of Duddeston, proves that he did not ; therefore I conclude, that the building, as it ought, went to decay soon after ; so that desolation has claimed the place for her own near four hundred years. This is corroborated by some old timber trees, long since upon the spot where the building stood.

The extensive parish of Aston takes in the two extremes of Birmingham, which supplies her with more christenings, weddings, and burials, than were, a few years ago, supplied by the whole parish of Birmingham.

#### *Witton*

Three miles north of Birmingham, and one from Aston



is *Witton* (Wicton) from the bend of the river, according to Dugdale; the property of a person at the conquest whose name was Staunchel. Fitz-Auscult seized it, and Staunchel, more fortunate than the chief of his countrymen, became his tenant; valued in the conqueror's survey at twenty shillings per annum.

It was afterwards vested in the crown; in 1240, Henry the III. granted it to Andrew de Wicton, who took his name from the place, for in Domesday it is Witone; therefore the name being prior, proves the remark.

Andrew, anxious after the boundary of his new purchase, brought an action against his neighbour, William de Pyrie (Perry) for infringing his property. Great disputes arise from small beginnings; perhaps a lawyer blew the flame.

The king issued his precept to the Sheriff of Staffordshire, in which Perry lies, to bring with him twelve lawful and discreet knights; and the same to the Sheriff of Warwickshire, of which Witton is part, to ascertain the bounds between them. Which was the aggressor, is hard to determine, but I should rather suppose 'Squire Perry, because *man* is ever apt to trespass; he resided on the premises, and the crown is but a sleepy landlord; not so likely to rob, as to be robbed.

There is a road, where foot seldom treads, mounded on each side, leading over the Coldfield, from Perry Bridge towards the Newlands, undoubtedly the work of this venerable band of discreet knights.

The stranger, of course, would deem the property between the contending parties of great value, which twenty-four of the principal characters of the age, the flower of two counties, marshalled by two chief officers, were to determine. But what will he think of the quarrelsome spirit of the times, when I tell him, it was only a few acres, which is, even at this day, waste land, and scarcely worth owning by either.

In 1290, Witton was the property of William Dixley ; in 1340, that of Richard de Pyrie, descendant of him, who, a hundred years before, held the contest. In 1426, Thomas East, of Hay Hall, in Yardley, was owner ; who sold it to John Bond, of Ward End, of whose descendants William Booth purchased it in 1620 ; an heiress of Booth brought it by marriage to Allestree, of Yardley, who enjoyed it in our days ; it was sold to John Wyrley, and is now possessed by George Birch, Esq. of Hamstead.

The house, left by its owners, is in that low, or rather boggy situation, suitable to the fashion of those times. I can discover no traces of a moat, though there is every conveniency for one : we are doubly hurt by seeing a house in a miserable hole, when joining an eligible spot.

### *Blakeley.*

Five miles north west of Birmingham, is *Blakeley Hall*, the manor house of Oldbury. If we see a venerable edifice without a moat, we cannot from thence conclude, it was never the residence of a gentleman, but wherever we find one, we may conclude it was.

Anciently, this manor, with those of Smethwick and Harborn, belonged to the family of Cornwallis, whose habitation was Blakeley Hall. The present building seems about three hundred years old.

The extinction of the male line, threw the property into the hands of two co-heirs ; one of whom married into the family of Grimshaw, the other into that of Wright, who jointly held it. The family of Grimshaw failing, Wright became then, and is now possessed of the whole.

I am unacquainted with the principal characters who acted the farce of life on this island, but it has long been in the tenancy of a poor farmer, who the proprietor assured me, was *best* able to stock the place with children. In 1769, the Birmingham Canal passing over the premises,

robbed the trench of its water. Whether it endangers the safety is a doubt, for *poverty* is the best security against violence.

*Weoley.*

Four miles west of Birmingham, in the parish of Northfield, are the small, but extensive ruins of *Weoley Castle*, whose appendages command a tract of seventeen acres, situate in a park of eighteen hundred.

These moats usually extend from half an acre to two acres, are generally square, and the trenches from eight yards over to twenty.

This is large, the walls massy ; they form the alleys of a garden, and the rooms the beds ; they display the remains of excellent workmanship. One may nearly guess at a man's consequence, even after a lapse of five hundred years, by the ruins of his house.

The steward told me, " they pulled down the walls as they wanted the stone." Unfeeling projectors ; there is not so much to pull down. Does not time bring destruction fast enough without assistance ? The head which cannot contemplate, offers its hand to destroy. The insensible taste, unable itself to relish the dry fruits of antiquity, throws them away to prevent another. May the fingers *smart* which injure the venerable walls of Dudley, or of Kenilworth. Noble remains of ancient grandeur ! copious indexes, that point to former usage ; We survey them with awful pleasure. The mouldering walls, as if ashamed of their humble state, hide themselves under the ivys ; the generous ivies, as if conscious of the precious relics, cover them from the injuries of time.

When land frequently undergoes a conveyance, necessity, we suppose, is the lot of the owner, but the lawyer fattens. *To have and to hold* are words of singular import ; they charm beyond music ; are the quintessence of language ;

the leading figure in rhetoric. But how would he fare if land was never conveyed? He must starve upon quarrels.

Instances may be given of land which knows no title, except those of conquest and descent; Weoley Castle comes nearly under this description. *To sign, seal, and deliver*, were wholly unknown to our ancestors. Could a Saxon freeholder rise from the dead, and visit the land, once his own, now held by as many writings as would half spread over it, he might exclaim, "Evil increases with time, and parchment with both. You deprive the poor of their breeches; I covered the ground with sheep, you with their skins; I thought, as you were at variance with France, Spain, Holland, and America, those numerous deeds were a heap of drum heads, and the internal writing the *articles of war*. In one instance, however, there is a similarity between us; we unjustly took this land from the Britons, you as unjustly took it from us; and a time may come, when another will take it from you. Thus the Spaniards founded the Peruvian empire in butchery, now tottering towards a fall; you, following their example, seized the northern coast of America; you neither bought it nor begged it, you took it from the natives; and thus your children, the Americans, with equal violence have taken it from you: no law binds like that of arms. The question has been, whether they shall pay taxes? which, after a dispute of eight years, was lost in another, *to whom* they shall pay taxes? The result, in a future day, will be, domestic struggles for sovereignty will stain the ground with blood."

When the proud Norman cut his way to the throne, his imperious followers seized the lands, kicked out the rightful possessors, and treated them with a dignity rather beneath that practised to a dog. This is the most summary title yet discovered.

Northfield was the fee-simple of Alwold (Allwood) but,



at the conquest, Fitz-Auscult seized it, with a multitude of other manors ; it does not appear that he granted it in knight's service to the injured Allwood, but kept it for his private use. Paganall married his heiress, and Sumeri married Paganall's, who, in the beginning of the thirteenth century, erected the castle. In 1322, the line of Sumeri expired.

Bottetourt, one of the needy squires, who, like Sancho Panza, attended William his master, in his mad, but *fortunate* enterprize, procured lands which enabled him to *live* in England, which was preferable to starving in Normandy. His descendant became, in right of his wife, co-heir of the house of Sumeri, vested in Weoley castle. He had, in 1307, sprung into peerage, and was one of our powerful barons till 1385, when the male line dropped. The vast estate of Bottetourt was then divided among females ; Thomas Berkley married the eldest, and this ancient barony was, in 1761, revived in his descendant, Norborne Berkley, the present Lord Bottetourt ; Sir Hugh Burnel married another, and Sir John St. Leger a third.

Weoley castle was, for many years, the undivided estate of the three families ; but Edward Sutton, Lord Dudley, having married a daughter of Berkley became possessed of that castle, which was erected by Sumeri, their common ancestor, about nine generations before.

In 1551, he sold it to William Jervoise, of London, mercer, whose descendant, Jervoise Clark Jervoise, Esq., now enjoys it.

Fond of ranging, I have travelled a circuit round Birmingham, without being many miles from it. I wish to penetrate farther from the centre, but my subject forbids. *Having therefore finished my discourse, I shall*, like my friends, the pulpitorians, many of whom, and of several

denominations, are characters I revere, *apply what has been said*.

We learn, that the land I have gone over, with the land I have not, changed its owners at the conquest; this shuts the door of inquiry into pedigree, the old families chiefly became extinct, and few of the present can be traced higher.—Destruction then overspread the kingdom.

The seniors of every age exclaim against the growing corruption of the times: my father, and perhaps every father, dwelt on the propriety of his conduct in younger life, and placed it in counterview with that of the following generation. However, while I knew him, it was much like other people's—But I could tell him, that he gave us the bright side of his character; that he was, probably, a piece of human nature, as well as his son; that nature varies but little, and that the age of William the Conqueror was the most rascally in the British annals. One age may be marked for the golden, another for the iron, but this for plunder.

We farther learn, there is not one instance in this neighbourhood, where an estate is continued till now in the male line, very few in the female. I am acquainted with only one family near Birmingham, whose ancestor entered with William, and who yet enjoy the land granted at that period; the male line has been once broken—perhaps this land was never conveyed. They shone with splendour near six hundred years. In the sixteenth century their estate was about £1400 a year; great for that time, but is now, exclusive of a few *pepper-corns* and *red roses*, long since withered, reduced to one little farm, tilled for bread by the owner. This setting glimpse of a shining family, is as indifferent about the matter, and almost as ignorant, as the team he drives.

Lastly, we learn that none of the lords, as formerly,

reside on the above premises ; that in four instances out of twenty-one, the buildings are now as left by the lords, Sheldon, Coleshill, Pipe, and Blakeley ; two have undergone some alteration, as Duddesdon and Erdington ; five others are re-erected, as Black Greves, Ulverley, King's Hurst, Castle Bromwich, and Witton ; which, with all the above, are held in tenancy ; in eight others, all the buildings are swept away, and their moats left naked, as Hogg's Moat, Yardley, Kent's Moat, Ward End, Park Hall, Berwood, and Weoley ; and in two instances the moats themselves are vanished, that of King's Norton is filled up to make way for the plough, and that of Aston demolished by the floods. Thus the scenes of hospitality and grandeur, become the scenes of antiquity, and then disappear.

*Sutton Coldfield.*

Though the topographical historian, who resides upon the premises, is most likely to be correct ; yet if *he*, with all his care, is apt to be mistaken, what can be expected from him who trots his horse over the scenes of antiquity ?

I have visited, for thirty years, some singular places in this neighbourhood, yet, without being master of their history ; thus a man may spend an age in conning his lesson, and never learn it.

When the farmer observes me on his territories, he eyes me *askance* ; suspecting a design to purchase his farm, or take it out of his hands. I endeavour to remove his apprehensions, by approaching him ; and introduce a conversation tending to my pursuit, which he understands as well as if, like the sons of Jacob, I addressed him in Hebrew ; yet, notwithstanding his total ignorance of the matter, he has sometimes dropped an accidental word, which has thrown more light on the subject, than all my researches for a twelvemonth. If an honest farmer, in

future, should see upon his premises a plumpish figure, five feet six, with one third of his hair on, a cane in his left hand, a glove upon each, and a Pomeranian dog at his heels, let him fear no evil; his farm will not be additionally tithed, his sheep worried, nor his hedges broken—it is only a solitary animal, in quest of a Roman phantom.

Upon the north-west extremity of Sutton Coldfield, joining the Chester road, is *The Bowen Pool*; at the tail of which, one hundred yards west of the road, on a small eminence, or swell of the earth, are the remains of a fortification, called *Loaches Banks*; but of what use or original is uncertain, no author having mentioned it.

Four hundred yards farther west, in the same flat, is a hill of some magnitude, deemed, by the curious, a tumulus—it is a common thing for an historian to be lost, but not quite so common to acknowledge it. In attempting to visit this tumulus, I soon found myself in the centre of a morass; and here, my dear reader might have seen the historian set fast in a double sense. I was obliged, for that evening, February 16, 1783, to retreat, as the sun had just done before me. I made my approaches from another quarter, April 13, when the hill appeared the work of nature, upon too broad a base for a tumulus; covering about three acres, perfectly round, rising gradually to the centre, which is about sixteen feet above the level, surrounded by a ditch, perhaps made for some private purpose by the owner.

The Roman tumuli were of two sorts, the small, for the reception of a general, or great man, as that at Cloudsley Bush, near the High Cross, the tomb of Claudius; and the large, as at Seckington, near Tamworth, for the reception of the dead, after a battle; they are both of the same shape, rather high than broad. That before us



comes under the description of neither ; nor could the dead well be conveyed over the morass.

The ground-plot, in the centre of the fort, at Loaches Banks, is about two acres, surrounded by three mounds, which are large, and three trenches, which are small ; the whole forming a square of four acres. Each corner directs to a cardinal point, but perhaps not with design ; for the situation of the ground would invite the operator to choose the present form. The north west joins to, and is secured by the pool.

As the works are much in the Roman taste, I might, at first view, deem it the residence of an opulent lord of the manor ; but the adjacent lands carrying no marks of cultivation, destroys the argument ; it is also too large for the fashion ; besides, all these manorial foundations have been in use since the conquest, therefore tradition assists the historian ; but here, tradition being lost, proves the place of greater antiquity.

One might judge it of Danish extraction, but here, again, tradition will generally lend her assistance ; neither are the trenches large enough for that people ; of themselves they are no security, whether full or empty ? for an active young fellow might easily skip from one bank to another. Nor can we view it as the work of some whimsical lord, to excite the wonder of the moderns ; it could never pay for the trouble. We must, therefore, travel back among the ancient Britons, for a solution, and here we shall travel over solid ground.

It is, probably, the remains of a British camp, for near these premises are Drude Heath (Druid's Heath) and Drude Fields, which we may reasonably suppose was the residence of a British priest ; the military would naturally shelter themselves under the wing of the church, and the priest with the protection of the military. The narrowness of the trenches is another proof of its being British ;

they exactly correspond with the style of that people. The name of the pool, *Bowen*, is of British derivation, which is a farther proof that the work originated from the Britons. They did not place their security so much in the trenches, as in the mounds, which they barricaded with timber. This camp is secured on three sides by a morass, and is only approachable on the fourth, that from the Cold-field. The first mound on this weak side is twenty-four yards over, twice the size of any other; which, allowing an ample security, is a farther evidence of its being British, and tradition being silent is another.

*Danes Camp, Danes Bank, or Bury Fields.*

About five miles south of Birmingham, and five furlongs off Solihull Lodge, is a place called *The Danes Camp*. But although neither history nor tradition speak of this particular event, it probably was raised in the ninth century.

The situation is well chosen, upon an eminence, about nine acres, nearly triangular, is yet in tolerable perfection; the ditch is about twenty feet wide; the base of the bank about the same; admits but of one entrance, and is capable of being secured by water. From the bottom of the ditch, to the top of the mound, was, when made, about twenty feet; and is a production of great labour.

*The Camp.*

I have already remarked, *a spirit of bravery is part of the British character*. The perpetual contests for power, among the Britons, the many roads formed by the Romans, to convey their military force, the prodigious number of camps, moats, and broken castles, left us by the Saxons, Danes, and Normans, our common ancestors, indicate *a martial temper*. The names of those heroic sovereigns,

Edward the III., and Henry the V., who brought their people to the fields of conquest, descend to posterity with the highest applause, though they brought their kingdom to the brink of ruin ; while those quiet princes, Henry the VII., and James the I., who cultivated the arts of peace, are but little esteemed, though under their sceptre, England experienced the greatest improvement.—The man who dare face an enemy, is the most likely to gain a friend. A nation versed in arms, stands the fairest chance to protect its property, and secure its peace : war itself may be hurtful, the knowledge of it useful.

In Mitchly Park, three miles west of Birmingham, in the parish of Edgbaston, is *The Camp* ; which might be ascribed to the Romans, lying within two or three stones cast of their Ikenield Street, where it divides the counties of Warwick and Worcester, but is too extensive for that people, being about thirty acres ; I know none of their camps more than four, some much less ; it must, therefore, have been the work of those pilfering vermin the Danes, better acquainted with other people's property than their own ; who first swarmed on the shores, then over-ran the interior parts of the kingdom, and, in two hundred years, devoured the whole.

No part of this fortification is wholly obliterated, though, in many places, it is nearly levelled by modern cultivation, that dreadful enemy to the antiquary. Pieces of armour are frequently ploughed up, particularly parts of the sword and the battleaxe, instruments much used by those destructive sons of the Raven.

The platform is quadrangular, every side nearly four hundred yards ; the centre is about six acres, surrounded by three ditches, each about eight yards over, at unequal distances ; though upon a descent, it is amply furnished with water. An undertaking of such immense labour, could not have been designed for temporary use.

The propriety of the spot, and the rage of the day for fortification, seem to have induced the Middlemores, lords of the place for many centuries, and celebrated for riches, but in the beginning of this work, for poverty, to erect a park, and a lodge; nothing of either exist, but the names.

*Mortimer's Bank.*

The traveller who undertakes an extensive journey, cannot choose his road, or his weather; sometimes the prospect brightens, with a serene sky, a smooth path, and a smiling sun; all within and without him is cheerful. Anon he is assailed by the tempests, stumbles over the ridges, is bemired in the hollows, the sun hides his face, and his own is sorrowful—this is the lot of the historian; he has no choice of subject, merry or mournful, he must submit to the changes which offer; delighted with the prosperous tale, depressed with the gloomy.

I am told, this work has often drawn a smile from the reader—it has often drawn a sigh from me. A celebrated painter fell in love with the picture he drew—I have wept at mine: such is the chapter of the lords, and the work-house. We are not always proof against a melancholy or a tender sentiment. Having pursued our several stages, with various fortune, through fifty chapters, at the close of this last tragic scene, emotion and the journey cease together.

Upon King's Wood, five miles from Birmingham, and two hundred yards east of the Alcester road, runs a bank for near a mile in length, unless obliterated by the new inclosure; for I saw it complete in 1775. This was raised by the famous Roger Mortimer, Earl of March, about 1324, to inclose a wood, from whence the place derives its name. Then that feeble monarch, Edward the II., governed the kingdom; the amorous Isabella, his wife,



governed the king, and the gallant Mortimer governed the queen.

The parishes of King's Norton, Solihull, and Yardley, uniting in this wood, and enjoying a right of commons, the inhabitants conceived themselves injured by the inclosure, assembled in a body, threw down the fence, and murdered the Earl's bailiff. Mortimer, in revenge, procured a special writ from the Court of Common Pleas, and caused the matter to be tried at Bromsgrove, where the affrighted inhabitants, over-awed with power, durst not appear in their own vindication. The earl, therefore, recovered a verdict, and the enormous sum of £300 damage. A sum nearly equal, at that time, to the fee-simple of the three parishes.

The confusion of the times, and the poverty of the people, protracted payment, till the unhappy Mortimer, overpowered by his enemies, was seized as a criminal in Nottingham Castle; and, without being heard, executed at Tyburn in 1328.

The distressed inhabitants of the three parishes humbly petitioned the crown for a reduction of the fine; when Edward the III. was pleased to remit about £260.

We can assign no reason for this imprudent step of inclosing the wood, unless the earl intended to procure a grant of the manor, then in the crown, for his family. But what he could not accomplish by finesse, was accomplished by fortune; for George the III., King of Great Britain, is lord of the manor of King's Norton, and a descendant from the house of Mortimer.

## LIST OF BAILIFFS AND CONSTABLES

CONTINUED FROM 1791, TO 1934.

*(Omitted page 221.)*

	High Bailiff.	Low Bailiff.	Constables.
1791	Thomas Archer	Samuel Rogers	John Wallis
1792	Thomas Cooper	William Dickenson	William Barrs
1793	Thomas Barker	Richard Peyton	Thomas Blood
1794	John Cope	Thomas Francis	Thomas Atkins
1795	Thomas Grundy	Joseph Smith	Thomas Atkins
1796	James Reynolds	Samuel Ryland	George Barton
1797	George Simcox	John Lawrence	William Whitmore
1798	John Clark	Mark Sanders	Samuel Boulton
1799	B. S. Heaton	Benjamin Stokes	Thomas Milward
1800	Thomas Hadley	Edward Hughes	Thomas Evans
1801	James Woolley	Timothy Smith	William Radenhurst
1802	James Goddington	John Jukes	Zachariah Parkes
1803	Theophilus Richards	Samuel Ryland	William Donald
1804	Richard Pratchet	William Price	Vincent Eagle

1805	William Smith	William Francis	John Phillips	William Rudder
1806	John Rotton	Thomas Potts	Isaac Aynsworth	Joseph Richards
1807	Henry Perkins	Thomas Small	Joseph Blunt	Thomas Whateley
1808	James Alston	Edward Cairns	Roger Anster	William Wills
1809	William Taylor	John Kettle	Richard Allen	Samuel Barnes
1810	Joseph Ledsam	William Crompton	William Jenkins	Charles Grafton
1811	Thomas Attwood	Thomas Phipson	Edward Baker	John Linwood
1812	Richard Spooner	Joseph Webster	Thomas Pemberton	Thomas Lowe
1813	S. Tertius Galton	T. Lakin Hawkes	Thomas Hensman	Samuel Morris
1814	Joseph Purden	J. Ridout	Thomas Lingen	William Shore
1815	Walter W. Capper	John Dickenson	William Christian	John Simpson
1816	John Twiner	Samuel Smith	Charles Cross	Henry Dunbar
1817	William Cotterill	William Blakeway	John Cope	William Chance
1818	Edward Thomason	William Phipson	Francis Shepherd	Samuel Hutton
1819	Joshua Scholefield	Thomas Ryland	W. H. Stewart	R. Roberts
1820	George Frederick Muntz	G. E. Lee	James Beale	William Wynn
1821	William Bickley	J. C. Bond	J. Cope	W. Ryley
1822	Charles Cope	William Beale	Samuel Pemberton	Edward Eagle
1823	J. Vale	Owen Johnson	John Ottley	Charles Hancock

	High Bailiffs.	Low Bailiffs.	Constables.
1824	R. Smith	John Ryland	Samuel Hill
1825	John Taylor	J. W. Phipson	Thomas Welch
1826	George Attwood	J. T. Lawrence	H. Evans
1827	J. F. Ledzam	W. H. Stewart	B. Barnes
1828	J. Walker	Thomas Ostler	Charles Fiddian
1829	William Chance	Edward Corn	C. Fairfax
1830	Oliver Mason	H. Smith	Edward Bach
1831	Daniel Ledsam	W. Wills	Thomas Whitfield
1832	J. Simcox	Josiah Corrie	Charles Edge
1833	Francis Lloyd	William Whitfield	G. C. Lingham
1834	Paul M. James	Thomas Tyndall	Mark Perkins
1835	. . . . .	. . . . .	. . . . .
1836	. . . . .	. . . . .	. . . . .
1836	. . . . .	. . . . .	. . . . .
1837	. . . . .	. . . . .	. . . . .
1838	. . . . .	. . . . .	. . . . .
1839	. . . . .	. . . . .	. . . . .
1840	. . . . .	. . . . .	. . . . .



*Court of Requests.*

(Continued from page 223.)

In 1807, a new act was obtained to extend and improve this court. The sum recoverable was extended to £5. The court and prison is at present in High Street, nearly opposite New Street, in a building formerly a tea warehouse. It is too small, and very inconvenient for the several purposes. It is known by the name of the "Old Public Office," it being the building formerly occupied by the magistrates, before the prison in Moor Street was erected; but generally by the more descriptive appellation of the "Louse-hole," alias "The Bug-hole." A table of the fees, as directed by the act, is hung up in the Court-house. There is no appeal from the decisions of this court. The imprisonment is limited to one hundred days, and is inflicted in proportion to the amount of the debt, unless in cases of fraud, when the commissioners have the power to increase the imprisonment to the extent of three months. The payments are generally allotted to be made by instalments, and if they are neglected the body or goods of the party may be taken in execution.

*Lawrence Street Chapel,*

(Omitted, page 285 )

Originally belonged to the Baptists, but has been attended since the year 1830, by a sect calling themselves "*Shilohites, or Lovers of Truth.*" There is neither singing nor praying, and the men wear their hats in the chapel or not, as they please. The published works and manuscript explanations of some portion of the Bible, are generally read by one of the congregation, which are written by the founder of the sect, who styles himself, Zion Ward. They have no paid ministers, the seats are

free, and the place is supported by a voluntary monthly subscription. Their fundamental doctrine is that "*All* scripture is given by *inspiration* of God," or is a divine parable, to be fulfilled in the acquisition and progress of divine knowledge in the human mind. It was at this chapel that four Shilohites married themselves, without the aid of priest or priestcraft; the ceremony used upon this occasion, was noticed by a large portion of the English press, and nearly all the American newspapers have published it. The editor of the "Boston Investigator," in pointing it out to his readers as a practical illustration of the advancement of liberal principles, says, "At last Englishmen have begun to marry themselves, without the aid of the clergy!" The following is a copy of the ceremony as advertised in the Birmingham Journal of May 10th, 1834.

## NOTICE.

At Lawrence Street Chapel, Birmingham, May the 4th, after the morning service was over, four Christian Dissenters desiring the congregation to stop, "took the marriage affair into their own hands," in the following manner:—

(Copy.)

Before this congregation I, CHARLES BRADLEY, Jun., give you, EMMA HARRIS, this ring to wear as a memorial of our marriage, and this written pledge, stamped with the impressions of the "*United Rights of Man and Woman*," declaring I will be your faithful husband from this time henceforward.

(Signed) CHARLES BRADLEY, JUN.

(Copy.)

Before this congregation, I, EMMA HARRIS, receive this ring to wear as a memorial of our marriage, and give you,

CHARLES BRADLEY, Jun., this written pledge, stamped with the impressions of the "*United Rights of Man and Woman*," declaring I will be your faithful wife from this time henceforward.

(Signed)

EMMA HARRIS.

(Copy.)

Before this congregation, I ROGER HOLINSWORTH, give you, MARY LOUISA BRADLEY, this ring to wear as a memorial of our marriage, and this written pledge, stamped with the impressions of the "*United Rights of Man and Woman*," declaring I will be your faithful husband from this time henceforward.

(Signed)

ROGER HOLINSWORTH.

(Copy.)

Before this congregation, I, MARY LOUISA BRADLEY, receive this ring to wear as a memorial of our marriage, and give you, ROGER HOLINSWORTH, this written pledge, stamped with the impressions of the "*United Rights of Man and Woman*," declaring I will be your faithful wife from this time henceforward.

(Signed)

MARY LOUISA BRADLEY.

(Witnesses) CHARLES BRADLEY, SEN.,  
HANNAH BRADLEY,  
WM. HARRIS, SEN.,  
ELIZABETH HARRIS,  
THOMAS TENANT,  
FRANCES BRADLEY TENANT,  
EDWIN BRADLEY,  
CHARLES SQUIRE,  
AND FORTY-TWO OTHERS.

I have inserted the above in consequence of these being the first marriages of this kind, that have taken place. They bear so near an approximation to the marriages of Quakers for which, in fact, there is no law to authorise the celebration, any more than those of the Shilohites.

### *The Japan Trade.*

(Omitted page 197.)

About the year 1740, John Baskerville, who was as before stated, brought up to the trade of a stone-cutter, and afterwards followed the profession of a schoolmaster, introduced the art of japanning to Birmingham, and manufactured a great variety of articles then in demand; but chiefly the more costly and ornamental productions of the art. John Taylor, whose manufactory was near the site of Union Street, soon after followed in this business, in addition to his other avocations. Henry Clay, Esq., who served the office of sheriff, in 1790, introduced the paper japan work, for which he obtained a patent. He improved the art, and brought the trade to a greater state of perfection, than any one that had preceded him. His paper work was celebrated throughout England, and in most of the foreign markets. The bronze work was first introduced by Clay, with complete success. His carriage was a complete pattern card of his trade: the pannels were made of paper, and the body of his coach was beautifully striped alternately chocolate and dark green. Baskerville's carriage, too, was adorned by the same art; and my informant says, "I well remember this buck, riding in his carriage, drawn by a pair of beautiful cream coloured horses, with long tails." The number of japan manufacturers soon increased to about six. Fashion and caprice have done much to vary the form and quality of japan ware; and competition has reduced the profits of



the trade to mediocrity. About 1775, tea-trays, or as they were then called, waiters, seldom exceeded twenty to twenty-four inches in length, and the only forms then made, were round, square, and oval, with pierced edges. The centres of them were either black, or in imitation of tortoiseshell. The black trays, after they had received two or three coats of varnish, being well hardened in the stove between each coat, were put into the hands of the polisher, whose business it was to give them a perfectly smooth surface, by rubbing them with pulverized pumice-stone, then with pulverized rotten-stone, and finishing with powdered rotten-stone and the bare hand. The tortoiseshell was produced as follows :—after these trays had received a smooth surface from the pumice-stone, a thin transparent varnish was laid over the tray, and for the best works, leaf silver was laid upon this, to which it adhered, it was then hardened in the stove, and a body of pontipool varnish was two or three times laid over it ; by the heat of the stove this was made opaque. A piece of pumice-stone was then applied to the parts where a tortoiseshell spot should appear, rubbing off the upper coat of varnish, so as to expose the surface of the silver ; the article was again put into the stove and hardened sufficiently to receive its final polish. Common tortoiseshell was made by the use of vermilion, instead of silver-leaf. Pontipool varnish is converted into opaque jet, by the application of lamp-black. Dutch tobacco-boxes were formerly manufactured in great quantities, from three to six inches long, and two to three and a half inches wide. A man with a wide mouth was usually compared to a Dutchman's tobacco box, for when his mouth was open, his head was half off. A variety of other Dutch articles were then manufactured. At this time the borders of the articles were usually painted with various devices. The yellow and Dutch metals imported from Holland, were used for that purpose. A spirit lacquer was

laid on to improve the colour, and make them look more like gold and silver leaf. Party-coloured leaves were afterwards used, but were soon set aside by the introduction of real gold-leaf; and subsequently, the introduction of coloured bronzes obtained so great a preference, that they came into general use, and for cheapness and beauty, cannot be excelled by any previous invention.

There are six waiter and tray blank makers in Birmingham, who employ about one hundred and ten persons, all males. There are twenty-one regular japanners, who employ upwards of five hundred persons, one half of whom are females. Those who make tin goods only, have not been reckoned. There are five paper tray makers in Birmingham, whose business it is to make the trays for the japanners, and probably employ at least sixty persons. The returns from this business, is supposed to be little short of £100,000 per annum. The nominal prices of the blanks have not varied for the last forty or fifty years, but the discount allowed has gradually increased during that time. Formerly the blank maker allowed ten per cent discount, but at the present time eighty per cent, that is, if he take to a warehouse, goods to the amount of £100, he will receive just £20. Common round corner trays with imitation border, thirty inches long, are sold at from sixteen to twenty shillings per dozen. These great reductions may be thus accounted for:—iron is considerably cheaper, the trays are made more slight, wages are reduced one half, and in some cases three fourths, and many improved methods have been adopted, both in making the blanks, and in the japanning, but more particularly in the latter. The trays only get one or two coats of varnish, instead of four or five, as formerly. The varnish, which cost eight shillings per gallon some years ago, now costs from three shillings, to three shillings and sixpence. The

centre of a thirty-inch tray is now painted for fourpence, that used to occupy half a day. The figures intended to ornament a tray are drawn upon paper, and transferred to the tray, and in some cases the same methods are adopted as stencillers use to imitate paper upon house walls. Notwithstanding the prices have been so reduced, the trade has kept advancing to perfection. Excellent work is still got up, which commands a good price, and none but the best will obtain good prices.

*Public Libraries.*

(Continued from page 229.)

The old library, established upon a narrow foundation in 1779, was considerably improved and extended, under the management of Dr. Priestley, in 1782, and now contains upwards of twenty thousand volumes, including public records, printed by order of the government. The ticket of admission is now worth ten pounds, and the annual subscription one pound. The building in Union Street, for the accomodation of the books, was erected in 1798, upon the tontine plan. The new library, situated in Temple Row, West, was commenced in the year 1796, and was carried on in a building in Cannon Street, till 1821, when it was removed to the present commodious building, erected for the purpose by tontine subscription. This library also contains a valuable collection of books, amounting to nearly ten thousand volumes. Annual subscription, one pound.

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